

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) ACT Aspire Testing in South Carolina, Spring 2015

*Please note that this document has been updated substantially from the version created in January 2015. Questions are now organized by topic, and new questions (denoted with *) have been added throughout. For “old” questions, the question number in the previous FAQs document is noted for reference purposes.*

Listed below are the most frequently asked questions that the South Carolina State Department of Education (SCDE) has received from district and school personnel about the statewide administration of the ACT Aspire tests. The numbers in parentheses indicate page numbers *in this document* where the answers are located.

Resources

- Q1:** Where can I find information about the ACT Aspire tests and the statewide administration? (1)
- Q2:** When are training workshops being offered for ACT Aspire? (1)
- Q3:** For ACT Aspire, will we be receiving assessment brochures to distribute to parents? [*old Q14*] (2)
- Q4:** Where can I get a copy of the PowerPoint presentation used in ACT’s College and Career Readiness Workshops that were offered in South Carolina during December 2014? [*old Q15*] (2)

Test Materials

- Q5:** How do we order ACT Aspire test materials? Do/did we need to do anything special in precode? [*old Q3*] (2)
- Q6:** Do students use one answer document and one test booklet for all subjects, or is there a separate document for each ACT Aspire subject? When/where will these test materials arrive? [*old Q4*] (2-3)
- Q7*:** What do we do about materials for students who were not entered into test sessions by the March deadlines? Will we receive overage materials? How do we order additional materials? (3)
- Q8*:** Can we transfer blank answer documents and other overage materials between schools? (3)
- Q9*:** Will we receive additional copies of the *Room Supervisor Manuals*? (3)
- Q10*:** Do we have to re-seal the boxes of test materials once we’ve verified receipt of the contents? In Training Session 1, it was stated that shrink-wrapped packages of test materials can’t be opened until the day of testing. How can we prepare our test materials for distribution? (3)
- Q11*:** In one of the training sessions, the presenter said that test booklets are serialized and must not be re-sorted from the order in which they are packaged. Does that mean we can’t take out test booklets for small group administrations? Do test booklets have to be returned in the same serial order in which they were received? (4)

Description of the Tests & Items

- Q12:** Are the ACT Aspire tests timed? [*old Q5*] (4)
- Q13:** What types of items are on the ACT Aspire tests? Where can I find sample test items? [*old Q6*] (4)
- Q14*:** How many items and/or points are on each ACT Aspire test? (4)
- Q15*:** Can you provide us with sample ACT Aspire answer documents for each subject test? (5)
- Q16:** How are the different types of items on the ACT Aspire tests scored? Should students try to answer as many questions as they can, even if they are not sure about the answers? Do students receive partial credit for constructed-response (CR) items? Do they see the CR scoring rubrics? [*old Q7*] (5)
- Q17:** I have several questions about the ACT Aspire writing test. [*old Q8, with new Q17f*]
- 17a)** Is it true that students will have only 30 minutes to write a response? Do students get any extra time to create a graphic organizer or to write and proof a rough draft? (5)
- 17b)** Where do students write their responses? Can they use scratch paper? (6)
- 17c)** Can students use dictionaries and thesauruses during the writing test? (6)
- 17d)** What mode of writing is assessed at each grade level for the ACT Aspire writing test? (6)
- 17e)** What is the scoring rubric for the writing test? Do students see a copy of the writing rubric? Where can we find examples of student responses for each score point? (6)

- 17f*)** One last question about writing ... Q17a says that the 30 minutes includes time for the student to read the prompt silently. For SCPASS, the test administrator read the writing prompt aloud to the students. Is the prompt read aloud for the ACT Aspire writing test? (6)

Supplemental Materials

- Q18:** For ACT Aspire math testing, can all students use calculators? What types of calculators are allowed? Can students use personal calculators? Will students receive formula sheets? [*old Q9*] (7)
- Q19*:** What about other supplemental materials for the ACT Aspire math tests, like rulers and protractors? Will students use those tools, and can we get copies of them? (7)
- Q20*:** Can students use scratch paper for all of the ACT Aspire tests? What about cover sheets? (7)
- Q21*:** Can students use highlighters during ACT Aspire testing, like they've been doing for SCPASS? (8)

Student Participation

- Q22*:** Who is required to take the ACT Aspire tests? Must all students with disabilities and English language learners be tested? (8)
- Q23*:** Are schools required to test expelled students? (8)
- Q24*:** Do home school students participate in ACT Aspire testing? (8)
- Q25*:** Are we required to test new students who enroll during the ACT Aspire testing window? (8)

Testing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

- Q26:** What ACT Aspire testing accommodations are available for students with disabilities? [*old Q10*] (8)
- Q27:** Does the "1st year exemption" for English language learners apply to the ACT Aspire ELA tests? Can English language learners receive testing accommodations for ACT Aspire? [*old Q11*] (9)
- Q28*:** Is Human Reader (English Audio) the only option for an oral administration of the ACT Aspire writing, mathematics, and optional science tests? (9)
- Q29*:** Can a student use an electronic speller as an accommodation for the ACT Aspire writing test? (9)
- Q30*:** Our English language learners are using bilingual dictionaries that aren't listed in Appendix D of the ACT Aspire *Accessibility User's Guide*. Can students use those dictionaries for testing? (10)

Testing Staff

- Q31:** I've heard that a person cannot serve as a School Test Coordinator for ACT Aspire testing if he/she has close relatives attending the school. Is this true? What about test administrators (room supervisors)? [*old Q12*] (10)
- Q32*:** Please clarify the room supervisor qualifications for ACT Aspire. Does a room supervisor have to be a certified teacher? Can a retired teacher serve as a room supervisor? (10)
- Q33*:** I have questions about ACT Aspire monitors. Is a monitor required for a group of 26 or more students? Who can serve as a monitor? Does a monitor need to be a district or school staff member? (11)
- Q34*:** What training is required for ACT Aspire room supervisors and monitors? (11)

Test Administration

- Q35*:** I've seen the published testing schedule for ACT Aspire, but I have follow-up questions. Do all students have to start testing at the same time each day? On the first day of testing, do the writing and English tests have to be administered in a specific order? (11)
- Q36*:** On April 28, do the writing test materials have to be distributed and returned before the English test materials are distributed? (11)
- Q37*:** Do we have to use the seating arrangements that are shown in the manuals? (11–12)
- Q38:** What type of timer can be used to time the tests? [*from old Q5*] (12)
- Q39*:** How do we handle breaks during testing? Can students have snacks during breaks? (12)

- Q40*:** Is a room supervisor required to “void” a student’s test if prohibited behavior is observed? (12)
- Q41*:** What should we do about a student with a broken arm or similar injury? What about a student who becomes ill during testing? (12–13)
- Q42*:** During make-up testing, how many tests per day can a student take? Can we administer ACT Aspire make-up tests on the SCPASS testing days? (13)
- Q43*:** Can we combine different subjects or grades in the same room for make-up testing or other special administrations? (13)

Test Security

- Q44*:** We know that testing staff must be trained in test security policies and procedures. Where can we find test security agreement forms for ACT Aspire? (13)
- Q45*:** Will we receive test security checklists for ACT Aspire? How should we handle the distribution of test materials? (13)
- Q46*:** We’ve seen a seating chart for ACT Aspire. Can we use our own versions? Are they required? (14)

Test Materials Return

- Q47*:** We’ve reviewed the packaging instructions for ACT Aspire test materials in Training Session 4 and have a few remaining questions about the non-scorable materials. Do the used test booklets have to be stacked in serialized order? I see that scratch paper and seating charts should be returned in the non-scorable materials. What about typed/separate paper responses and test security checklists? (14)
- Q48*:** Do we need to schedule the pickups for our schools? We’re concerned about getting materials back from alternative schools in time for the May 4th shipment. What should we do? (14)

Test Results & Score Reports

- Q49:** When can we expect to receive ACT Aspire test results? What score reports will be provided for districts, schools, and students? What are the cut-off scores for different performance levels? [old Q16] (14)

Optional Science Test

- Q50:** I’d like to know more about the optional science test that can be given for ACT Aspire. [old Q13]
- 50a)** Can the ACT Aspire science tests be administered in place of the SCPASS science tests? (15)
- 50b)** What standards do the ACT Aspire science tests assess? (15)
- 50c)** If districts and schools choose to administer the optional science tests, when could those tests be administered? (15)
- 50d)** Would the ACT Aspire science test have to be administered to all students? How would we order the science test materials? (15)
- 50e)** What results would be provided for students taking the ACT Aspire science test? (15)

Resources

Q1: Where can I find information about the ACT Aspire tests and the statewide administration?

A: Information about ACT Aspire testing, in general and in South Carolina, is available online on several different websites. The “Summative Assessments” page of the public ACT Aspire website (<http://www.discoveractaspire.org/assessments/summative/>) provides information about a number of topics and access to a variety of resources—including technical bulletins (e.g., see *Technical Bulletin #1* for information about test content and *Technical Bulletin #2* for information about norms, scoring, scaling, and psychometrics). When referring to the information on this site or other ACT Aspire sites, keep in mind that the spring 2015 administration of ACT Aspire in South Carolina will primarily be paper-based only, and ACT Aspire information for online or computer-based testing will not be applicable. (Note: A limited amount of online testing is being permitted for oral administrations of the ACT Aspire writing, mathematics, and optional science tests in spring 2015. See Q28 in this FAQs document.)

A new ACT Aspire Landing Page, <http://actaspire.pearson.com>, with links to a variety of resources and training materials, was launched on January 12. This page provides a “one-stop shop” for districts and schools administering the ACT Aspire summative assessments. Tabs on the page include “Training and Manuals,” “Exemplar Items,” “Technology Set-up” (for online testing), “ACT Aspire Portal,” “News,” and “Support.” Please refer to this landing page for the most current versions of the ACT Aspire manuals, including the *Accessibility User’s Guide* (with information about available testing accommodations), the *Test Coordinator Manual*, and the *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing*. Click on the “View Current Manuals” button at <http://actaspire.pearson.com/allresources.html>. From this page, you can also visit Avocet (an indexed and searchable list of manuals, guides, checklists, and other resources) and the Training Management System or TMS (a resource site with training modules covering various topics).

ACT Aspire also hosts a web page with information and resources specifically for South Carolina. The web address for this page cannot be posted on a public website, but has been provided directly to District Test Coordinators (DTCs) and School Test Coordinators (STCs). (The web page address also appears in the PowerPoints for ACT Aspire Training Sessions 2, 3, and 4—see Q2 in this FAQs document.)

In addition, the Office of Assessment provides the spring 2015 ACT Aspire testing schedule and additional information on the SCDE website at <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/>. On the SCDE’s ACT Aspire page, you will find links to documents created by the SCDE under “Additional Resources & Information” (e.g., this FAQs document, FAQs for ACT Aspire Accommodations & Accessibility, and updates on ACT Aspire accommodations in South Carolina). Under “External Resources,” you will find links to documents and presentations provided by ACT Aspire staff (e.g., checklist of dates, sample parent letter, sample answer documents, seating chart, and all of the ACT Aspire training sessions for South Carolina).

For answers to specific questions about the test administration (e.g., test materials, use of the online portal, administration procedures, scoring and reporting), DTCs and STCs can contact ACT Aspire Customer Support via a toll-free phone number (888-802-7502) or email (actaspire_implementation@actaspire.org). Please direct questions for the SCDE to Sheila Graybeal in the Office of Assessment, at 803-734-8649 or sgraybea@ed.sc.gov.

Q2: When are training workshops being offered for ACT Aspire?

A: ACT Aspire staff presented a series of four web-based training sessions, beginning in January and continuing through March. Each training session focused on a different aspect of the ACT Aspire test administration and was offered on multiple days and at various times. (For details on the schedule and topics, refer to the *2015 ACT Aspire State Testing Checklist of Dates*, posted on the SCDE’s ACT Aspire web page (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/>). The PowerPoints for each training session, as well as links to a recorded version of each session, are posted on the SCDE’s ACT Aspire page and on the ACT Aspire-hosted page for South Carolina (see Q1 in this FAQs document).

In addition, short training videos on a variety of topics are available via the ACT Aspire TMS or Training Management System: <https://actaspire.tms.pearson.com/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2f>. Enter your email address on the login page and press “Continue” to access the available modules, which are categorized under tabs such as “Assessment Preparation” and “Assessment Administration.”

Q3: [Old Q14] For ACT Aspire, will we be receiving assessment brochures to distribute to parents?

A: ACT Aspire, LLC does not plan to print or ship any hard copies of ACT Aspire brochures to districts and schools. Electronic versions of several documents developed by ACT, Inc. and ACT Aspire, LLC can be accessed from the ACT button on the SCDE home page (<http://www.ed.sc.gov>). These documents include a “letter” or flyer for parents and students about ACT Aspire, The ACT, and ACT WorkKeys (http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/pi/act/documents/SC_ACT-ACT-Aspire-WorkKeys_Parent-Flyer_Web.pdf) and a generic ACT Aspire brochure (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/pi/act/documents/ACTAspire.pdf>).

A sample ACT Aspire parent letter was developed jointly by ACT Aspire and SCDE staff for optional use in South Carolina. The sample parent letter is posted under “External Resources” on the SCDE’s ACT Aspire page (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/>). The letter is a Word document that can be downloaded, revised, and used by districts and schools, as desired, to notify parents of testing.

Q4: [Old Q15] Where can I get a copy of the PowerPoint presentation used in ACT’s College and Career Readiness Workshops that were offered in South Carolina during December 2014?

A: A link to the PowerPoint is provided on the SCDE website (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/>), under “External Resources.”

Test Materials**Q5: [Old Q3] How do we order ACT Aspire test materials? Did/do we need to do anything special in precode?**

A: The primary mechanism for ordering ACT Aspire test materials is through the ACT Aspire online portal. On January 23, the SCDE provided ACT Aspire staff with an initial student file based on the precode submissions from districts. That file, containing basic student demographic information, was then uploaded to the ACT Aspire portal. On March 16, the SCDE provided an update file that added new students to the portal (i.e., students not in the January precode submission for any district in the state).

Districts/schools did not need to enter any information specifically for ACT Aspire in the existing precode fields for either the January or March file submissions. Precode fields such as customized test booklets and oral/signed administration were not used for ACT Aspire. In an effort to assist school personnel in setting up test sessions within the portal (a process which, in turn, affects the packaging of preprinted answer documents), the SCDE transmitted the homeroom teacher field from PowerSchool and, for most students, the “teacher of record” (according to the official course activity codes) for ELA, math, science, and social studies. The SCDE’s student file for ACT Aspire also included the materials sort field for each subject—but districts/schools did not need to complete these fields for ELA and math (and errors were subsequently detected in the sort fields for spring 2015).

As indicated in the *2015 ACT Aspire State Testing Checklist of Dates*, during the week of February 9, schools could begin to input information in Personal Needs Profiles (PNPs) in the portal to indicate any customized test materials (i.e, braille and large-print) and other accommodations needed by students with disabilities or English language learners. Schools could then set up test sessions in the portal through March 9; this process, in turn, drove the initial preprinting and packaging of student answer documents and ordering of test booklets. Through March 25 (8:00 a.m.), schools could continue to enter PNP and test session information within the portal in order to receive preprinted answer documents. (See Q6 and Q7 in this FAQs document for information about materials shipments and additional materials.)

Q6: [Old Q4] Do students use one answer document and one test booklet for all subjects, or is there a separate document for each ACT Aspire subject? When/where will these test materials arrive?

A: At each grade level, there is a separate answer document and test booklet for each ACT Aspire subject: writing, English, reading, mathematics, and, if administered as an option, science. For students placed in test sessions in the portal by the March deadlines (see Q5 in this FAQs document), schools should receive preprinted answer documents, packaged by subject, grade, and test session. Test booklets are not personalized (i.e., are not preprinted for specific students) and are shrink-wrapped in packages of 10.

(Answer to Q6 continued)

ACT Aspire test materials are scheduled to arrive in two shipments. Materials for students in test sessions by March 9 are due to arrive April 13–15. The second shipment of materials, for students in test sessions by March 25, is scheduled to arrive by April 20. Materials are being shipped directly to the School Test Coordinator (STC), using the addresses that were provided to the SCDE in December (in response to the SCDE’s request for the designation of STCs for all schools with grades 3–8 students).

Q7*: What do we do about materials for students who were not entered into test sessions by the March deadlines? Will we receive overage materials? How do we order additional materials?

A: Schools will receive a 10% overage of answer documents and test booklets for use with students who were not entered into test sessions in the portal by the March deadlines (see Q5 in this FAQs document). Schools should use overage answer documents for any students without preprinted answer documents. The student’s name and other demographic information must be hand-gridded on the answer document by school staff either before or after testing, in supervised sessions. As a minimum, the student’s name must be printed on the answer document before testing. Note also that the student must be entered into the ACT Aspire portal and placed into a test session, so that the **ACT Aspire Portal ID** can be hand-coded on the answer document. There will be a separate portal ID for each subject test that the student takes (e.g., one each for writing, English, reading, and mathematics). It is critical that the Portal ID be correctly coded on the answer document to ensure accurate reporting of test results for the student.

Please note that the 10% overage is a higher percentage than typically provided for ACT Aspire materials (e.g., a 5% overage is indicated on page 14 of the *Test Coordinator Manual*). If additional materials are needed (i.e., above the 10% overage received), district/school personnel can place an order for those materials using the **Additional Materials Order Form** posted under “Manuals and Supplements” on the ACT Aspire-hosted web page for South Carolina. See instructions on the form.

Q8*: Can we transfer blank answer documents and other overage materials between schools?

A: Yes, if needed, blank answer documents and overage test booklets can be transferred between schools in the district. Since the test booklets are barcoded with security numbers, the STC at each school (sending and receiving) should be sure to keep a record of any transfers, should questions arise later regarding the location of missing test materials.

Q9*: Will we receive additional copies of the *Room Supervisor Manuals*?

A: Copies of the *Room Supervisor’s Manual for Paper Summative Testing* will be included in the ACT Aspire test materials shipments, in quantities of 1 manual per 15 students. If additional copies are needed, manuals can be ordered from ACT Aspire customer service using the Additional Materials Order Form (see Q7 in this FAQs document).

Q10* Do we have to re-seal the boxes of test materials once we’ve verified receipt of the contents? In Training Session 1, it was stated that shrink-wrapped packages of test materials can’t be opened until the day of testing. How can we prepare our test materials for distribution?

A: While the *Test Coordinator Manual* (page 14) and several of the training sessions have indicated that boxes of test materials should be re-sealed after verification of the contents, this step (i.e., re-sealing) is not required as long as test materials are kept in secure, locked storage after receipt. STCs should follow the same procedures for storage of ACT Aspire test materials as for SCPASS materials.

Similarly, STCs may open shrink-wrapped packages of ACT Aspire test materials prior to testing in order to prepare materials for distribution to their room supervisors/teachers. As with SCPASS test security procedures, these materials must be kept securely stored before and after testing. These instructions were included in the ACT Aspire Training Session 4 presentation.

Q11* In one of the ACT Aspire training sessions, the presenter said that test booklets are serialized and must not be re-sorted from the order in which they are packaged. Does that mean we can't take out test booklets for small group administrations? Do test booklets have to be returned in the serial order in which they are received?

A: Since there are multiple forms per subject and grade, those forms should be distributed in the order packaged, to the extent possible. However, test booklets may be removed, as needed, for use in small group or other special administration situations. Test booklets do not need to be returned in serial order.

Descriptions of the Tests and Items

Q12: [Old Q5] **Are the ACT Aspire tests timed?** [See Q38 for types of timing devices.]

A: Yes, all of the ACT Aspire tests are timed. The time allotments were established as part of the test development and field testing process. The time limits vary by subject and may also vary by grade level. For example, at all grade levels, the time limit is 30 minutes for the writing test and 60 minutes for the reading test. For English, the time limit is 30 minutes for grades 3–5 and 35 minutes for grades 6–8.

Time limits for all subjects and grades can be found on the public ACT Aspire website, under the heading of “Avoiding Test Fatigue” (<http://www.discoveractaspire.org/assessments/summative/>), as well as in the ACT Aspire test administration schedule on the SCDE website (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/>). Note that extra time is allowable as a testing accommodation for students with disabilities and English language learners, if specified in a student’s IEP, 504 Plan, or ESOL accommodation plan.

Q13: [Old Q 6] **What types of items are on the ACT Aspire tests? Where can I find sample test items?**

A: The ACT Aspire tests include several different types of items. For the writing test, students will respond to a prompt (see Q17 in this FAQs document). The English test consists of multiple-choice (or selected response) items only. The other subject area tests (reading, mathematics, and optional science) include both multiple-choice and constructed-response (or short answer) items. Sample items for each subject area can be found on the public ACT Aspire website (<http://www.discoveractaspire.org/assessments/test-items/>) and on the ACT Aspire Landing Page (<http://actaspire.pearson.com/exemplars.html>). Please note that any information about technology-enhanced items for ACT Aspire applies only to online or computer-based testing. As indicated in the ACT Aspire *Summative Assessment: Technical Bulletin #1* (Tables 3, 6, and 12, http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pdf/2014_ACT-AspireTechnicalBulletin1.pdf), multiple-choice items are used in place of technology-enhanced items on the paper-based tests.

Q14*: **How many items and/or points are on each ACT Aspire test?**

A: For spring 2015, the total numbers of **items** that will appear on each ACT Aspire test, by subject and grade level, are indicated on the first page of the chart posted on the SCDE’s ACT Aspire web page (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/documents/Attach-ACT-ACTAspireMemo-11-21-14.pdf>). There will be 1 item on the grades 3–8 writing tests, 32 items on the grades 3–5 English tests, 45 items on the grades 6–8 English tests, 31 items on the grades 3–8 reading tests, 31 items on the grades 3–5 mathematics tests, 41 items on the grades 6 and 7 mathematics tests, and 45 items on the grade 8 mathematics test. As indicated in Q13 above, the reading and mathematics tests include both multiple-choice (MC) and constructed-response (CR) items; most of the items on these tests will be MC. According to the layout of the sample ACT Aspire answer documents (see Q15 in this FAQs document), for example, there will be only 4 CR items on the reading tests.

The numbers of **points** that count toward student scores are indicated by item type for each subject and grade level in Tables 3, 6, 11, and 12 in the ACT Aspire *Summative Assessment Technical Bulletin #1* and posted on the public ACT Aspire website under the sample items (see links in Q13 above). Keep in mind several important factors when referring to these tables. Since CR items are worth more than one point (see Q16 in this FAQs document), the numbers of points can never be the same as the numbers of items, except in cases where a test consists of MC items only (e.g., English). Furthermore, except for writing the ACT Aspire tests in spring 2015 include field test items that will not count toward student scores (e.g., there are 25 total points on the grades 3–5 English tests, yet 32 MC items on these tests for spring 2015).

Q15*: Can you provide us with sample ACT Aspire answer documents for each subject test?

A: Watermarked sample ACT Aspire answer documents can be accessed from the SCDE’s ACT Aspire page (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/ACTAspireSampleAnswerDocuments.cfm>). For each subject (writing, English, reading, mathematics, and option science), you will find a sample grade 3 document and a sample middle school-level document (either grade 6, 7, or 8).

Q16: [Old Q7] How are the different types of items on the ACT Aspire tests scored? Should students try to answer as many questions as they can, even if they are not sure about the answers? Do students receive partial credit for constructed-response (CR) items? Do they see the CR scoring rubrics?

A: For multiple-choice questions on the ACT Aspire tests, students receive a raw score point for each question answered correctly. Points are not deducted for incorrect answers—i.e., students are not “penalized” for guessing or answering incorrectly. In the *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing*, the verbal instructions that are read to students for each test include information about the types of test questions. For multiple-choice questions, the verbal instructions recommend that students try to answer every question, even if they are not sure which answer is correct. These instructions are to be read verbatim to students on test day.

Constructed-response (CR) items are worth more than one point; there are 4-point, 3-point, and 2-point CR items. The CR items are scored according to rubrics that give varying amounts of credit for responses depending on the degree to which the response is correct and complete. For a 4-point item, for example, a response could receive a score of 1, 2, 3, or 4. (For information on the scoring of writing responses, see Q17e in this FAQs document.)

The scoring rubrics or criteria for the CR items on the ACT Aspire reading, mathematics, and optional science tests are based on the subject matter content or reasoning ability reflected in the student’s response, not on punctuation or grammar. As described in the ACT Aspire *Summative Assessment Technical Bulletin #1* (see page 19 of the document, http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pdf/2014_ACT-AspireTechnicalBulletin1.pdf), the reading CR items specifically assess reading comprehension rather than writing skills. Such items, for example, might require a student to “formulate a conclusion by making connections within a passage and provide support using specific details from the text” or to “identify cause and effect relationships within a passage and provide support using specific details from the text” (see pages 19–20 of *Technical Bulletin #1*). For mathematics CR items, students may be expected to justify or explain their answers.

Students are not provided with scoring rubrics for the CR items. As noted above, however, the *Room Supervisor Manual* includes verbal instructions with information about the types of test questions, and these instructions for the “short-answer questions” may contain text with tips or reminders to students about what to include in their responses. For grades 3–5 mathematics short answer questions, for example, students are instructed to “Give reasons in your answer”; while for grades 6–8 mathematics, students are instructed that “Your response will be evaluated on how well it explains and justifies the mathematics of the question.”

Q17: [Old Q8] I have several questions about the ACT Aspire writing test.**17a) Is it true that students will have only 30 minutes to write a response? Do students get any extra time to create a graphic organizer or to write and proof a rough draft?**

For all grades (3–8), the time limit for the writing test is 30 minutes. This time starts after the room supervisor reads the verbal instructions for the writing test and is the total time allowed for students to read the prompt silently, plan and write a response (e.g., story, essay, or narrative), and review their work. (As noted in the answer to Q12 in this FAQs document, extra time may be provided for students with disabilities or English language learners, if specified in a student’s accommodation plan.)

17b) Where do students write their responses? Can they use scratch paper?

The ACT Aspire writing answer document contains lined pages for the writing response. There are three lined pages in the answer documents for grades 3, 4, and 5, and four lined pages in the answer documents for grades 6, 7, and 8. The line spacing approximates wide-ruled paper for grades 3–5 and college-ruled paper for grades 6–8. (For sample writing answer documents, refer to Q15 in this FAQs document.) Students may make pre-writing notes in their test booklets. Students may also use scratch paper, if they request it. (See Q20 in this FAQs document regarding the use of scratch paper.)

17c) Can students use dictionaries and thesauruses during the writing test?

No, students are not permitted to use dictionaries or thesauruses for the writing test. If specified in a student’s ESOL accommodation plan, an English language learner may use a word-to-word dictionary that is ACT-approved or state-approved (see Q30 in this FAQs document).

17d) What mode of writing is assessed at each grade level for the ACT Aspire writing test?

As indicated in the *Exemplar Writing Test Questions* document available on the ACT Aspire website (http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pdf/2014_exemplar_actaspire_writing.pdf) and on the ACT Aspire Landing Page, the modes of writing assessed at each grade level are as follows:

- reflective narrative writing in grades 3 and 6,
- analytical expository writing in grades 4 and 7, and
- persuasive/argumentative writing in grades 5 and 8.

17e) What is the scoring rubric for the writing test? Do students see a copy of the writing rubric? Where can we find examples of student responses for each score point?

The scoring rubrics used for the ACT Aspire writing test are included in the *Exemplar Writing Test Questions* (see Q17d above). As indicated in that document and in ACT Aspire *Technical Bulletin #1* (page 24 of the bulletin, http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pdf/2014_ACT-AspireTechnicalBulletin1.pdf), the scoring rubrics vary somewhat, depending on the mode of writing and grade level. All, however, are analytic rubrics that assess four domains: the generation of ideas (reflective narrative, analysis, or argument), development, organization, and communication of ideas in standard written English (i.e., language use). As shown in Table 11 of *Technical Bulletin #1*, for grades 3–5 writing, the maximum number of points that can be earned per domain is five, for a total of 20 possible points; for grades 6–8, the maximum number of points per domain is six, for a total of 24 possible points.

As with the CR items (see Q16 in this FAQs document), students are not provided with the writing scoring rubric. For each grade level, however, the verbal instructions in the *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing* include a bulleted list of tips or reminders appropriate to that grade level. For grade 3 writing, for example, students are instructed to “develop your story with specific details and explain your idea” and to “use interesting adjectives and descriptive words to make your story interesting to read.” Refer to pages 23–28 of the *Room Supervisor Manual* for the verbal instructions for each grade level of the writing test. (To access the manual, click on the “View Current Manuals” button at <http://actaspire.pearson.com/allresources.html>.)

Currently, there are no available examples of student responses for the ACT Aspire writing tests.

17f*) One last question about writing ... Q17a says that the 30 minutes includes time for the student to read the prompt silently. For SCPASS, the test administrator read the writing prompt aloud to the students. Is the prompt read aloud for the ACT Aspire writing test?

For the ACT Aspire writing tests, the prompt is not read aloud to students. As indicated in the verbal instructions for the writing tests (pages 23–28 of the *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing*), students are instructed to read the prompt or task before beginning to plan and write their responses. The prompt may be read aloud (or signed) only to a student who has oral or signed administration (e.g., “Human Reader” for paper/pencil testing) specified as an accommodation for the writing test in an IEP, 504 Plan, or ESOL accommodation plan.

Supplemental Materials

Q18: [Old Q9] **For ACT Aspire math testing, can all students use calculators? What types of calculators are allowed? Can students use personal calculators? Will students receive formula sheets?**

A: The use of **calculators** for ACT Aspire mathematics depends on the grade level of the test taken, as indicated in the *Test Coordinator Manual* (page 5) and *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing* (page 4). Students who are taking the grades 3–5 mathematics tests cannot use a calculator, even as a testing accommodation for a student with disabilities. According to the ACT Aspire manuals, all problems on the grades 3–5 mathematics tests can be solved without a calculator.

For the grades 6–8 mathematics tests, all students are allowed, but not required, to use an approved calculator. Calculators can be provided by the school (e.g., class sets) or by the student. Students may bring backup calculators and extra batteries, but they may not have more than one calculator on the desk or in operation at a time. Students are not allowed to share calculators during testing. It is the school's responsibility to make sure that all calculators used by students are approved before testing. Refer to www.actstudent.org/faq/calculator.html for information about permitted and prohibited calculator models.

Separate **formula sheets** are not provided for the ACT Aspire mathematics tests at any grade level. According to the ACT Aspire *Summative Assessment: Technical Bulletin #1* (see page 26 of the bulletin, http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pdf/2014_ACT-AspireTechnicalBulletin1.pdf), "Some ACT Aspire mathematics items give students the formula(s) they need. An item of this type goes beyond the recall of the formula so that the focus is on using the formula appropriately. Some ACT Aspire mathematics items do not include a formula even though one might be used in the problem. This item type collects evidence of the student coming up with the relationship needed to solve the problem. The result is that ACT Aspire mathematics assessments have a good balance across the dimensions of understanding and using mathematical formulas."

Q19*: **What about other supplemental materials for the ACT Aspire math tests, like rulers and protractors? Will students use those tools, and can we get copies of them?**

A: There are no supplemental materials for the ACT Aspire mathematics tests, such as rulers or protractors.

Q20*: **Can students use scratch paper for all of the ACT Aspire tests? What about cover sheets?**

A: Yes, scratch paper may be used for any of the ACT Aspire tests. The *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing* (page 4), indicates that scratch work should be done in the test booklet; however, students are allowed additional scratch paper if they request it. The verbal instructions read aloud to students prior to the beginning of each test (page 30 of the manual) include a statement about requesting scratch paper, if needed.

As noted on page 4 of the *Room Supervisor Manual*, if scratch paper is used, it must be identified with the student's first and last name, school name, subject tested, and school grade. To avoid having a student lose testing time, the SCDE recommends that instructions about labeling the paper with this information be provided to students at the conclusion of testing, prior to the collection of the scratch paper and other test materials. For example, at the end of the last "say" text on page 31 of the *Room Supervisor Manual*, the room supervisor may add, "If you used scratch paper, please write the following information at the top of the paper: your first and last name, the school name, and the subject and grade level of the test you just took." Note that all scratch paper used by students must be collected by the room supervisor and returned to the School Test Coordinator (STC). The STC, in turn, must return the scratch paper to the ACT Aspire contractor with non-scorable test materials.

According to the ACT Aspire *Accessibility User's Guide* (page 34), any size or color of plain, lined, or graph paper may be used as scratch paper.

Additionally, as with SCPASS, districts and schools may choose to have students use cover sheets. Prior to testing, blank paper or index cards (lined or unlined) may be distributed to students to assist students in keeping their place in the test booklets or answer documents or to cover their responses.

Q21*: Can students use highlighters during ACT Aspire testing, like they’ve been doing for SCPASS?

- A:** Yes, as with SCPASS testing, any student may use highlighters or colored pencils for ACT Aspire paper/pencil testing. Highlighters and colored pencils may be used to highlight or mark text within the test booklets only. As cautioned in the ACT Aspire *Accessibility User’s Guide* (page 34), highlighters may **not** be used on any paper answer documents or answer space, since this may interfere with scoring.

Student Participation**Q22*: Who is required to take the ACT Aspire tests? Must all students with disabilities and English language learners be tested?**

- A:** All public school students in grades three through eight must be tested with the ACT Aspire writing, English, reading, and mathematics tests or with the corresponding South Carolina alternate assessment. (Refer to <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/48/index.cfm> for information about alternate assessments.) Please see the Spring 2015 SPCASS *Test Administration Manual* or *TAM* (pages 14–15) for details regarding student participation guidelines for statewide testing. For more information on ACT Aspire testing for students with disabilities and English language learners, see Q26 and Q27 in this FAQs document.

Q23*: Are schools required to test expelled students?

- A:** Expelled students are no longer enrolled in public school and do not participate in state testing, including the ACT Aspire, unless the expelled student has an IEP. When a student with an IEP has been expelled, a new IEP must be written that outlines services to be provided during the expulsion period and the manner in which the student will be tested.

Q24*: Do home school students participate in ACT Aspire testing?

- A:** Students whose home school program is registered though the district must participate in state testing, including the ACT Aspire. The same home school testing procedures described in the SCPASS *TAM* (page 14) apply for ACT Aspire testing. Please note that District Test Coordinators are being notified by ACT Aspire staff regarding procedures for entering these students into the ACT Aspire portal in such a way as to ensure that home school test results are not included in any district or school data.

Q25*: Are we required to test new students who enroll during the ACT Aspire testing window?

- A:** Yes, as with any state testing program, any student who enrolls in a school during the ACT Aspire testing window should be tested. School personnel should manually enter the student into the portal, place him/her into a test session for each subject, and test the student using blank overage answer documents and test booklets. As indicated in Q7 in this FAQs document, the Portal ID for each test session must be coded on the student’s answer document for each subject. If the student enters the school near the end of the testing window, the school should administer as many ACT Aspire tests as possible and practical.

Testing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners**Q26: [Old Q10] What ACT Aspire testing accommodations are available for students with disabilities?**

- A:** Many, but not all, of the testing accommodations that were available for the SCPASS writing, English language arts, and mathematics tests are available for the ACT Aspire tests. The SCDE has prepared and posted a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document that addresses accommodations and accessibility for ACT Aspire testing in South Carolina (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/documents/ASPIRE-FAQs-AccomAndAccess-2-27-15.pdf>). A chart listing ACT Aspire supports that would be commonly used by, and are available for, students with disabilities is presented in response to question 2 (see pages 1 and 2 of that FAQs document). The FAQs for accessibility and accommodations are intended to clarify information in the ACT Aspire *Accessibility User’s Guide*, which serves as the official document for accommodations and other usability features of the ACT Aspire assessment for both paper/pencil and online testing. (To access the *Accessibility User’s Guide*, click “View Current Manuals” at <http://actaspire.pearson.com/allresources.html>.)

Q27: [Old Q 11] Does the “1st year exemption” for English language learners apply to the ACT Aspire ELA tests? Can English language learners receive testing accommodations for ACT Aspire?

A: In accordance with guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, the same “1st year exemption” for English language learners (ELLs) that applied to the SCPASS writing and English language arts (ELA) tests applies to the ACT Aspire ELA tests. Students who are in their first year in a U.S. school and who are less than initially proficient (PowerSchool Field SC_English Proficiency 1.0–4.9 or A–D) based upon their scores on an approved screener test W-APT are exempted from the **ACT Aspire writing, English, and reading tests**. The same methodology that has been used by the SCDE for the last several years will be used to determine eligibility for this exemption (i.e., using values in the English proficiency field in PowerSchool, in combination with the “Birth Country” and “U.S. School Entry Date” fields). The general policy regarding the determination of dates for this exemption is from the last day of make-up of state accountability testing in the previous school year to the last day of make-up of state accountability testing in the current school year. Accordingly, the exemption period for the spring 2015 ACT Aspire writing, English, and reading tests would be for any qualifying student who enrolled during the period May 17, 2014 through May 13, 2015. If there are any questions about this guidance, please contact Crystal Fields, Title III Coordinator, at 803-734-8306 or cfields@ed.sc.gov. (Note: At the time of this FAQs update, the Office of Federal and State Accountability was drafting a memorandum to send to districts regarding these guidelines.)

Similar to the accommodations for students with disabilities (see Q26 in this FAQs document), many, but not all, of the ELL testing accommodations that were available for SCPASS writing, English language arts, and mathematics tests are available for the ACT Aspire tests. The FAQs for accessibility and accommodations (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/documents/ASPIRE-FAQs-AccomAndAccess-2-27-15.pdf>) includes a chart listing ACT Aspire supports that would be commonly used by, and are available for, English language learners (see page 3 of that FAQs document).

Q28*: Is Human Reader (English Audio) the only option for an oral administration of the ACT Aspire writing, mathematics, and optional science tests?

A: This question is also addressed in the FAQs for accommodations and accessibility (see question 31, <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/documents/ASPIRE-FAQs-AccomAndAccess-2-27-15.pdf>). The state legislature mandated that the statewide ELA and mathematics tests for grades 3–8 be administered only in a paper-based format for spring 2015. However, many districts requested the option to test students needing oral administration via online or computer-based testing (CBT). The SCDE sought and received approval from the state legislature and worked with ACT Aspire staff to offer such an online option. As a result, schools now have the option to provide students with oral administrations via human reader using the paper-based format or through text-to-speech via the online or CBT format. District and school personnel have been provided with communications about this CBT option and an opportunity for technology training by ACT Aspire staff. Please note that, for the spring 2015 ACT Aspire administration, online testing is being allowed only for oral administrations of the writing, mathematics, and optional science tests.

Q29*: Can a student use an electronic speller as an accommodation for the ACT Aspire writing test?

A: On April 1, District Test Coordinators and Special Education Directors received a memorandum from the Office of Assessment notifying them that South Carolina has been approved by ACT, Inc. to conduct a small-scale pilot of the use of electronic spellers for the ACT Aspire writing test. For details regarding this newly available accommodation, please refer to the memorandum posted on the SCDE’s ACT Aspire page, at <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/documents/Memo-NewlyAvailableACT-AspireAccommodation.pdf>. Note that any electronic speller used as a testing accommodation for the ACT Aspire writing test must meet the guidelines specified in the memorandum. Questions regarding this accommodation may directed to Anne Mruz, at 803-734-8034 or amruz@ed.sc.gov.

Q30*: Our English language learners are using bilingual dictionaries that aren't listed in Appendix D of the ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide. Can students use those dictionaries for testing?

- A:** On April 1, District Test Coordinators were notified (via email from ACT Aspire) about an important update in the policy regarding allowable bilingual word-to-word dictionaries for the ACT Aspire writing, mathematics, and optional science tests. The update (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/documents/Update-W2W-DictionariesForACT-Aspire.pdf>) explains a new process for requesting state approval of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries that are not listed in Appendix D of the ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide. This process was jointly agreed upon by ACT Aspire and SCDE staff in response to requests from districts and schools. Included in the update are details regarding criteria that a bilingual word-to-word dictionary must meet to be considered for state approval and the procedures for seeking such approval.

Testing Staff**Q31: [Old Q12] I've heard that a person cannot serve as a School Test Coordinator for ACT Aspire testing if he/she has close relatives attending the school. Is this true? What about test administrators (room supervisors)?**

- A:** In order to protect students and testing staff from any suspicions of impropriety, ACT Aspire, LLC has an established policy regarding relatives of students serving as testing staff. Generally, relatives of students taking ACT Aspire tests should not serve in any capacity in which they would have access to the secure test materials that related students would be using when taking the tests. In their respective roles, test coordinators (School Test Coordinators) and room supervisors (test administrators) must handle secure test materials as part of their responsibilities.

It is preferred that relatives of students taking ACT Aspire tests not serve in the role of test coordinator. Test coordinators have access to, and are responsible for the secure storage and distribution of, secure test materials for all participants in the ACT Aspire test administration. Whenever possible, this policy should be followed. However, in some circumstances, this may not be possible. In those circumstances, the district/school should monitor the testing process so that test coordinators who have a relative testing do not handle the test materials of the relative without another responsible individual present.

Relatives of students taking ACT Aspire tests should not serve as a room supervisor (test administrator) in the same room as the student relative. Room supervisors are responsible for distributing, and monitoring the security of, the test materials being used in that particular testing room. It is permissible for a relative to serve as a room supervisor in the same school/district as a related student, provided that student is not testing in the room being supervised by the related testing staff person.

Q32*: Please clarify the room supervisor qualifications for ACT Aspire. Does a room supervisor have to be a certified teacher? Can a retired teacher serve as a room supervisor?

- A:** The ACT Aspire *Test Coordinator Manual* (page 7) specifies criteria that a room supervisor must meet. (To access the manual, click "View Current Manuals" at <http://actaspire.pearson.com/allresources.html>.) These criteria include being proficient in English, experienced in testing and classroom management, and a staff member of the school or district where the test administration will take place. Per an agreement between ACT Aspire and SCDE staff, a room supervisor is not required to be a certified teacher, as long as the individual has been employed by the district in an instructional capacity and has been approved by the District Test Coordinator (DTC) to serve as a room supervisor. In keeping with this agreement, retired teachers can be approved by the DTC to serve as room supervisors. This information was included in the ACT Aspire Training Session 4 presentation.

As noted in Q31 above, an individual cannot serve as a room supervisor in a testing room where a close relative is being tested. Also, as with SCPASS, all room supervisors must be trained in test security and test administration policies and procedures (see Q34 and Q44 in this FAQs document).

Q33*: I have questions about ACT Aspire monitors. Is a monitor required for a group of 26 or more students? Who can serve as a monitor? Does a monitor need to be a district or school staff member?

A: According to the *Test Coordinator Manual* (page 7), an additional staff member (i.e., a monitor to assist the room supervisor) is recommended for a testing group of 26 or more students. Like the policy for SCPASS testing, monitors are recommended, but not required, for ACT Aspire testing.

As with room supervisors, ACT Aspire and SCDE staff have reached an agreement whereby the same qualifications required for SCPASS monitors can be applied to monitors for ACT Aspire. In other words, an ACT Aspire monitor can be a parent or other school volunteer, a teacher's aide, or other district or school personnel (e.g., music teacher, P.E. teacher, counselor)—provided the individual has received appropriate training and does not serve as a monitor in a room where a close relative is being tested. Additionally, per ACT Aspire policy, the individual should not be a private consultant or paid individual tutor for a student in the testing room.

Q34*: What training is required for ACT Aspire room supervisors and monitors?

A: All room supervisors, monitors, and other staff who will be assisting with ACT Aspire testing must receive training with regard to South Carolina test security legislation and state board regulations (see Q44 in this FAQs document for further information.) In addition, room supervisors and must be familiar with testing procedures for the ACT Aspire administration. It is highly recommended that room supervisors view or review ACT Aspire Training Session 4. (As indicated in Q2 in this FAQs document, the PowerPoint and a link to a recorded version of the training session are posted on the SCDE's ACT Aspire web page.) Additionally, School Test Coordinators (STCs) should distribute copies of the *Room Supervisor Manual* as soon as possible after receipt, so that teachers and others serving as room supervisors can familiarize themselves with ACT Aspire testing policies and procedures, including the verbal instructions to be read aloud for each test. The information in the *Room Supervisor Manual* should also be reviewed with individuals who will serve as monitors. STCs should make sure that all testing staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the ACT Aspire test administration (refer to pages 7 and 8 of the *Test Coordinator Manual*).

Test Administration

Q35*: I've seen the published testing schedule for ACT Aspire, but I have follow-up questions. Do all students have to start testing at the same time each day? On the first day of testing, do the writing and English tests have to be administered in a specific order?

A: For each day of ACT Aspire testing, districts and schools can arrange the testing schedule as best suits the needs of teachers and students. There is no "uniform start time" on each day of testing. On April 28, the writing test should be administered first, and the English test second, as listed in the ACT Aspire testing schedule. Students may take a break between the two tests, after the Writing materials are collected from students and before any English test materials are distributed to students.

Q36*: On April 28, do the writing test materials have to be distributed and returned before the English test materials are distributed?

A: At the beginning of the day on April 28, the School Test Coordinator (STC) may distribute to each room supervisor all of the test materials (test booklets and answer documents) that are needed for both the writing and the English tests. Following the administration of the writing test, the room supervisor should keep those test materials in a secure location in the room until students have completed the English test and all test materials (for both writing and English) are ready to be returned to the STC.

Q37*: Do we have to use the seating arrangements that are shown in the manuals?

A: Both the *Test Coordinator Manual* (page 18) and *Room Supervisor Manual* (page 10) include figures that display "acceptable and unacceptable seating arrangements" for ACT Aspire testing. These seating arrangements should be used to the extent possible. As stated in Training Session 4, however, the SCDE recognizes that it may not always be possible for schools to adhere to these recommendations.

(Answer to Q37 continued)

In such cases, the district or school should use the seating arrangements used for other statewide testing programs such as SCPASS, making sure that all test security procedures are followed and that students are closely monitored during testing to ensure that they do not engage in prohibited behaviors. Note that dividers or partitions may be used, as appropriate for the test setting.

Q38: [From Old Q5] **What type of timer can be used to time the tests?**

A: According to the *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing* (page 6), room supervisors (or test administrators) should use a stopwatch or interval timer to ensure that the exact time is allowed for each test. Per ACT Aspire staff, a SmartBoard timer (or any other visible electronic timer such as a TV or computer monitor) is permissible, as long as the timer is silent (including when time is up). The timer may count either up or down. A room supervisor may use a timer on a cell phone, tablet, or similar electronic device, as long as the device is silent and is being used only for the purpose of timing the test.

Q39*: **How do we handle breaks during testing? Can students have snacks during breaks?**

A: As indicated in the *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing* (page 6), students may be allowed to have bathroom breaks during ACT Aspire testing. If only one student leaves the room at a time, the student does not need to be accompanied by an adult. If multiple students leave, they must be supervised. When a student leaves the room for a bathroom break, his/her test booklet and answer document must be collected and then returned when the student returns to the room. The room supervisor should note when the student leaves and returns, in order to ensure that the student receives the full time allotted for the test (e.g., if the break lasted five minutes, then five minutes must be added to the end of the regular testing time for that student).

If it is determined that a break is needed for the entire group of students, the room supervisor should “stop the clock” at the beginning of the break and then resume timing at the end of the break. Any such breaks must be silent—i.e., no student interaction is allowed—and all test materials must be closed and secured. Students must be supervised throughout the break. Snacks are permissible, as needed; but care must be taken to ensure that test materials are not damaged by food or drink.

Q40*: **Is a room supervisor required to “void” a student’s test if prohibited behavior is observed?**

A: Both the *Test Coordinator Manual* (page 10) and *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing* (page 7) include a list of student behaviors that are prohibited during ACT Aspire testing, along with instructions for the room supervisor to follow if such behaviors are suspected or observed. According to the *Room Supervisor Manual*, if the room supervisor observes any prohibited behavior, he/she should dismiss the student from the room and “void” the student’s test. As indicated in the *Test Coordinator Manual*, however, testing staff should refer to local state policies before marking any test as void. Accordingly, as with SCPASS and other statewide tests, districts and schools should follow the policies and procedures established by the district for investigating and documenting suspected student cheating incidents during ACT Aspire testing. Based on district policy, if cheating is confirmed for a student, the STC may choose to void the student’s test. This information was included in the ACT Aspire Training Session 4 presentation.

Also, as with SCPASS, student cheating should not be reported to the SCDE unless an electronic device is involved in the incident. In such instances, the SCDE will need the district and school to verify that no secure test content was copied or shared.

Q41*: **What should we do about a student with a broken arm or similar injury? What about a student who becomes ill during testing?**

If a student suffers a broken arm or similar injury that interferes with the ability to record responses in the answer document, the student may be scheduled for make-up testing and/or the student may use one of the appropriate response supports (e.g., dictating or typing responses) described in the *Accessibility User’s Guide*. For paper/pencil testing, it is not necessary to document the support in a PNP; however, the support should be documented in school records should concerns arise later about test results.

(Answer to Q41 continued)

If a student becomes ill during testing, follow the same procedures as described for SCPASS testing (page 20 of the Spring 2015 SCPASS *Test Administration Manual*). In addition, the time at which the student stopped testing should be recorded so that the student can receive the remaining time to complete the test during make-up testing. The interruption in testing should be noted in school records and taken into consideration with regard to any use of the student's test results.

Q42*: During make-up testing, how many tests per day can a student take? Can we administer ACT Aspire make-up tests on the SCPASS testing days?

A: The SCDE recommends that students take no more than two make-up tests per day. Schools can use May 7 and May 8 as make-up days for ACT Aspire, provided students first take the SCPASS test that is scheduled for administration on each of those days. (Note that districts and schools may be using other days for SCPASS test administrations if they are participating in online testing for SCPASS.)

Q43*: Can we combine different subjects or grades in the same room for make-up testing or other special administrations?

A: Both the ACT Aspire *Test Coordinator Manual* (page 16) and *Room Supervisor Manual for Paper Summative Testing* (pages 9 and 11) indicate that all students in a room must take the same subject and grade tests. Due to differences in verbal instructions and timing of the tests across subjects and grade levels, this is strongly recommended for both regular and make-up testing. ACT Aspire staff, however, have confirmed that, in cases where it is necessary (e.g., due to staffing and/or scheduling concerns), students from several grade levels may be tested in the same room as long as the students are taking the same subject test and the verbal instructions and timing for the test are the same. To determine which grade levels may be combined, please refer to the grade-specific verbal instructions in the *Room Supervisor Manual* (beginning on page 14). Examples of possible combinations include grades 3–5 English, grades 6 and 7 English, and grades 3–5 mathematics. Please note that, for oral administrations involving a “human reader,” all students must be taking the same subject and grade level (and using the same form of the test).

Test Security

Q44*: We know that testing staff must be trained in test security policies and procedures. Where can we find test security agreement forms for ACT Aspire?

A: Test security agreement forms specifically for ACT Aspire are posted on the SCDE's Test Security page, <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/ie/Assessment/TestSecurity.cfm>. There are three forms: one for District Test Coordinators (DTCs) and School Test Coordinators (STCs), one for room supervisors, and one for monitors (or other testing staff). All testing staff should sign these forms following training in test security policies and procedures for the ACT Aspire test administration.

As part of this training, testing staff are expected to review South Carolina test security legislation and State Board of Education test security regulations (see the Test Security web page). Also posted on the Test Security web page are a document on reporting test security violations, a document on test security violations and students with disabilities, and the Test Security Violation Action Form. As with any state testing program, DTCs are expected to report test security violations for ACT Aspire directly to the SCDE.

Q45*: Will we receive test security checklists for ACT Aspire? How should we handle the distribution of test materials?

A: Test security checklists are included with the shipments of ACT Aspire test materials. However, these checklists do not contain the level of detail found in the test security checklists for other statewide testing programs such as SCPASS, nor are the security checklists for ACT Aspire available in electronic format. STCs may adapt the ACT Aspire test security checklists for use in signing test materials out/in on each day of testing. Alternatively, STCs may devise their own checklists or a similar system for documenting that all materials distributed to a room supervisor each day are subsequently returned.

Q46*: We've seen a seating chart for ACT Aspire. Can we use our own versions? Are they required?

A: An ACT Aspire seating chart template is posted on the SCDE's ACT Aspire web page, at <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/documents/ACT-Aspire-SeatingChart.pdf>. As noted in the instructions on the back of the chart, schools do not have to use the seating arrangement shown on the front page. If a different arrangement is used, school staff can create their own charts and attach them to the template for return after testing. The information at the top of the chart (school name, etc.) should be completed before return. Please note that the information in boxes 3 and 4 is not expected to be exact and may not be applicable. If schools create their own seating charts and do not wish to attach them to the template, the seating charts must contain the identifying information shown on the front page of the template. The charts are required for all testing **except** individual administrations.

Test Materials Return**Q47*: We've reviewed the packaging instructions for ACT Aspire test materials in Training Session 4 and have a few remaining questions about the non-scorable materials. Do the used test booklets have to be stacked in serialized order? I see that scratch paper and seating charts should be returned in the non-scorable materials. What about typed/separate paper responses and test security checklists?**

A: As indicated in Q11 in this FAQs document, ACT Aspire **test booklets** do not need to be packaged and returned in serialized order. The only requirement is that all test booklets be stacked facing the same direction. For **typed/separate paper responses**, make sure all responses have been transcribed into scorable answer documents; then label each student's typed/separate paper response with the same identifying information that is required for scratch paper (see Q20 in this FAQs document) and return all typed/separate paper responses with the non-scorable materials. **Test security checklists** for ACT Aspire should be retained in the district or school security file(s) for one year. As indicated in the instructions on the security checklists, the forms should not be returned with the test materials.

Q48*: Do we need to schedule the pickups for our schools? We're concerned about getting materials back from alternative schools in time for the May 4th shipment. What should we do?

A: ACT Aspire is arranging the UPS pickups for all schools. Each school should be ready for its pickup by 8:00 a.m. on the scheduled days (May 4 and May 14). Test materials for all testing completed by April 30 should be returned by May 4. In cases where test materials need to be transported between schools before and after testing (e.g., for students testing in alternative schools or other locations), school staff should make every effort to return materials by the initial return date; otherwise, keep the test materials in secure storage for return with the remaining test materials on May 14.

Test Results & Score Reports**49: [Old Q16] When can we expect to receive ACT Aspire test results? What score reports will be provided for districts, schools, and students? What are the cut-off scores for different performance levels?**

A: Districts and school should expect to receive ACT Aspire test results by mid to late June. An overview of the types of reports that districts and schools will be receiving was provided in the ACT Aspire training workshop that was held for District Test Coordinators in March (see the section on "Reporting," at <http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/214/documents/ACT-AspireSC-TC-MarchTraining.pdf>). Individual Student Reports (ISRs) and various district and school summary reports will be posted to the ACT Aspire portal. Paper copies of the ISRs (one per student) will be sent to the schools at a later date (most likely in July). In addition to these "static" reports, districts and school will be able to generate "dynamic" teacher/group reports through the ACT Aspire portal.

Information about scoring and scaling for the ACT Aspire tests can be found in *Technical Bulletin #2: Norms, Scoring, Scaling, and Psychometrics* (http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pdf/2014_ACT-AspireTechnicalBulletin2.pdf). Pages 80 and 81, for example, indicate the four performance (or readiness) levels established for the ACT Aspire tests ("Exceeding," "Ready," "Close," and "In Need of Support") and scale score cut-offs by subject and grade.

Optional Science Test

Q50: [Old Q13] I'd like to know more about the **optional science test** that can be given for ACT Aspire.

50a) Can the ACT Aspire science tests be administered in place of the SCPASS science tests?

No, districts/schools cannot choose to administer the optional ACT Aspire science tests in place of the SCPASS science tests. Only the SCPASS science tests are specifically aligned to the South Carolina science academic standards and approved for accountability purposes. Further questions about this should be directed to Sheila Graybeal at the SCDE (803-734-8639 or sgraybea@ed.sc.gov).

50b) What standards do the ACT Aspire science tests assess?

Unlike the SCPASS science tests, which were specifically developed to assess students' knowledge and skills relative to the South Carolina science academic standards, the ACT Aspire science tests have been designed to provide information about college and career readiness standards (CCRS). The CCRS for science are not based on the Next Generation Science Standards or other national standards; rather, they are the result of ACT's research on college and career readiness, including a national curriculum survey. There are three reporting categories for ACT Aspire science: 1) interpretation of data, 2) scientific investigation, and 3) evaluation of models, inferences, and experimental results. More information about the content of the ACT Aspire science tests can be found in the ACT Aspire *Summative Assessment: Technical Bulletin #1* (see pages 29–32, http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pdf/2014_ACT-AspireTechnicalBulletin1.pdf).

50c) If districts and schools choose to administer the optional science tests, when could those tests be administered?

The optional science tests can be administered any time during the make-up testing period for ACT Aspire—i.e., from Friday, May 1 through Wednesday, May 13. The science test materials must be returned with all other ACT Aspire test materials by Thursday, May 14.

50d) Would the ACT Aspire science test have to be administered to all students? How would we order the science test materials?

If districts/schools decide to administer the optional ACT Aspire science test, this decision can be made at an individual student level. The optional science test does not have to be administered district-wide or even school-wide. Districts/schools can choose to administer the optional ACT Aspire science test in some grades and not others, as well as in some schools and/or classrooms and not others. The ACT Aspire portal would be used to designate which, if any, students would be taking the science test.

50e) What results would be provided for students taking the ACT Aspire science test?

Any student who took the ACT Aspire science test would receive the following information: an ACT Aspire science score, performance indicators in the science reporting categories or skills areas (e.g., "Interpretation of Data"), ideas for improving specific skills areas, and a STEM score (based on both mathematics and science). In addition, students in grade 8 who took English, reading, mathematics, and science tests would receive a composite "Progress Toward Career Readiness" score, indicating progress toward a Bronze, Silver, or Gold level ACT National Career Readiness Certificate.

This document has been created by the SCDE.

For more information about ACT Aspire testing in South Carolina, please contact Sheila Graybeal, Office of Assessment, sgraybea@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-8649. Questions about the use of accommodations for statewide assessments may be directed to Anne Mruz, Office of Assessment, amruz@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-8034.

Please refer to ACT Aspire documentation and websites for current policies and procedures.