

2022 RI Next Generation Science Assessment Test Security Requirements

(excerpt from RI NGSA Test Coordinator's Manual)

Part I. Test Security

The purpose of the Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment (RI NGSA) is to elicit valid results showing what students in grade 5, 8, and 11 know and can do in science, in accordance with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

The purpose of the RI NGSA Test Security Requirements is to protect the validity of those results.

Principals and school personnel authorized to have access to secure materials and test content must follow the requirements listed below and may not participate in, direct, assist in, encourage, or fail to report any testing irregularity or act of misconduct.

Principals are responsible for ensuring that all test administrators and school personnel authorized to have access to secure materials and test content are trained in and comply with the requirements and instructions contained in this part of the Test Coordinator’s Manual (TCM) and in the Test Administrator’s Manual (TAM).

Please note the following definitions for the purposes of this section and this manual:

“Secure” content and materials include the following:

- test questions not publicly released
- any onscreen test content (e.g., passages, stimuli)
- student responses to test questions
- student testing tickets (must be tracked using internal tracking forms)
- used scratch paper (scratch paper must be accounted for on tracking forms but individual sheets do not need to be counted)

“Access” refers to handling secure testing materials, but does not include viewing test content, which is prohibited. Students may never transport secure testing materials, including from their initial testing room to a test completion room.

“Locked storage area” refers to the central locked area that must be used to store all secure RI NGSA testing materials when they are not in use. Test coordinators must restrict access to the locked storage area to only those school personnel authorized by the test coordinator to handle secure materials. For example, custodial or cleaning staff may not enter or access the locked area where the test coordinator stores secure materials.

Each principal must complete the Principal’s Certification of Proper Test Administration (PCPA) to certify that the school has followed proper NGSA test security requirements and test administration protocols. See [Appendix A](#) of the TCM for the certification statements to which the principal must attest.

Responsibilities of the Principal and Test Coordinator(s)

Authorize and Train Test Administrators

Principals and test coordinators (TCs) authorize specific personnel to serve as test administrators and must train them to properly administer RI NGSA tests. Designate other school personnel as necessary to maintain a secure test administration (e.g., personnel permitted to access secure test materials, personnel to serve as hallway or restroom monitors, technology coordinators) and train them in RI NGSA security requirements.

1. Before the training session, distribute
 - a. a print or digital copy of the TAM to every test administrator, and
 - b. a print or digital copy of the test security requirements to all school personnel who have access to secure materials.
2. Document that all test administrators have received a TAM and that school personnel who have access to secure materials have received the test security requirements (see sample form in [Appendix A](#)).
 - a. Train test administrators prior to test administration. This TCM and TAM describe the protocols necessary to conduct a proper RI NGSA test administration.
 - b. For test administrators who provide accommodations to students with disabilities, or English learners (EL students), provide training in the implementation of accommodations in accordance with the *Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual* (available at www.ride.ri.gov/Accommodations).

Communicate Test Security Requirements School-Wide

1. Instruct students in RI NGSA test security requirements.
2. Ensure all school personnel (including those not involved in testing) understand the need for test security and how your school will ensure test security during the testing window.

Implement Test Security Policies and Procedures

Develop local policies and procedures that support and supplement these requirements to ensure proper test security at all times.

1. Schedule tests to avoid conflicts with recess or lunch (see the Scheduling Test Sessions section for more information about scheduling test sessions).
2. Ensure that tests are administered within the prescribed window and in the prescribed order.
3. Ensure that hallways are properly monitored during testing so that students are supervised at all times when they leave testing rooms (e.g., to use the restroom or transition to a test completion room).
4. Ensure that test administrators administer tests according to the Administering the RI NGSA section in TAM.

Maintain Materials Security

Keep secure RI NGSA testing materials in locked central storage when RI NGSA tests are not being administered.

1. Account for all secure testing materials at the end of each test session and keep them in the locked storage area when not in use.
2. Restrict access to the locked storage area to only those school personnel authorized to have access to secure materials.

Monitor printing, distribution, and collection of testing materials.

1. Student testing tickets must be printed, distributed, and collected after testing.
2. Used scratch paper must be accounted for and tracked during testing.

Securely destroy (i.e., shred) the following materials after testing.

1. Student testing tickets
2. Used scratch paper (i.e., written on by students)

Shared Responsibilities of All Personnel Authorized to Have Access to Secure Materials

Test Coordinators, Test Administrators, Technology Staff, and other school personnel (e.g., proctors) authorized to have access to secure materials are responsible to ensure the following.

Participate in Test Security and Test Administration Training

Receive training in test security requirements and test administration protocols.

1. Test Coordinators are expected to participate in one of RIDE’s training sessions on RI NGSA test security and test administration protocols (see www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Training).
2. Test administrators, test coordinators, and other school personnel authorized to have access to secure test materials must attend the school training session. A sample form that test coordinators may use to document participation can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Maintain Security of Materials

Document the location of secure materials at all times.

1. Track secure materials using the sample Test Materials Internal Tracking Form found in [Appendix A](#) or a similar document (test coordinators keep these forms on file for three years). See [task 1 in section C of Part 2](#) for more information about requirements for internal tracking forms.
2. The test coordinator and each test administrator must independently count testing tickets before signing the tracking forms and transferring custody of the tickets.
3. Do not leave testing tickets or other secure RI NGSA materials unattended at any time unless they are locked in the secure storage area.

Maintain Security of Testing Locations

Ensure the security of testing rooms (see [task 9 in section C of Part 2](#) for more information about testing locations).

1. Do not allow unauthorized persons to enter the testing room. This includes parents, researchers, reporters, students not scheduled to be testing at the time, and any school personnel (including teachers) not assigned to the room as test administrators.
2. School administrators, district personnel, and RIDE observers may enter testing rooms to monitor and observe testing procedures.
3. Technology staff may enter testing rooms to troubleshoot problems with computer-based testing, but like other school personnel, are not permitted to photograph or otherwise duplicate secure test content on-screen.

Maintain Security of Test Content

Ensure the security of test content.

1. Do not discuss or in any way reveal the contents of test questions or student responses to test questions before, during, or after test administration, except as noted in this manual. Because RI NGSA test questions are secure and confidential until released publicly, school personnel should not discuss or review test questions with students or adults even after testing has been completed.
2. Do not duplicate any secure test content, including but not limited to audiotaping, videotaping, photographing, photocopying, typing, or copying by hand.
3. Do not remove testing materials from the school.
4. Do not allow scratch paper to be retained, discarded, or otherwise removed by students.
5. Be sure that testing tickets and used scratch paper have been destroyed after testing.
6. Do not allow students access to secure test questions prior to testing.
7. Do not read or view any student responses.
8. Do not change any student responses.

Responsibilities of Test Administrators

All Test Administrators must sign the Test Security Agreement in [Appendix A](#) prior to the administration of the RI NGSA.

Participate in Test Security and Test Administration Training

Receive training from the test coordinator in administering test sessions properly and securely.

1. Review the TAM and all relevant test security requirements before administering test sessions.
2. Attend the training session led by the test coordinator before test administration. A sample form that test coordinators may use to document participation in training and receipt of TAM can be found in [Appendix A](#).
3. Understand and follow the protocols related to administering tests to students with disabilities and EL students and protocols related to administering accessibility features. See the [Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual](#) for more information.

Implement Test Administration Protocols Properly

Administer all tests according to appropriate protocols.

1. Administer tests during the prescribed testing window, and in the prescribed order.
2. Follow the directions and read the scripts in the TAM (and in any subsequent updates provided to test coordinators by RIDE) verbatim to students.
3. Remove or cover any classroom displays that provide information related to the content being assessed or to test-taking strategies (see [task 9 of section C of Part 2](#) for more information about testing locations).
4. Provide students with all required test materials as listed in the TAM.
5. Prevent the use of prohibited materials (see [task 1 of section C of Part 2](#)). Note that results may be invalidated for students who use cell phones or other prohibited electronic devices during a test session, including after a student finishes testing and turns in test materials, during a break, and during the transition to a test completion area.

Actively Monitor Testing Environment

Focus full attention on the testing environment at all times.

1. Monitor the testing process by circulating around the room frequently. When not circulating around the room, test administrators should maintain a clear view of the students and keep their attention focused on them.
2. Ensure that students are not left unsupervised during testing, including during breaks and during transitions to test completion locations.
3. A test administrator may view students' tests on-screen only for the purpose of reading aloud a word as part of an accessibility feature or accommodation, or in order to assist a student who is having difficulty with the computer interface (see the [Administering the RI NGSA section of the TAM](#)), or for students with the text-to-speech accommodation to read the options of a drop-down menu if text-to-speech is not doing so.
4. Students must work only on the test session being administered, and test administrators may not start or resume any test session in the TDS other than the one being administered.

Ensure Integrity of Student Responses

Ensure that students provide answers that are strictly their own and do not participate in any form of cheating.

1. Ensure that students do not consult notes, textbooks, or other teaching materials; do not access the Internet (except through the CAI Secure Browser during testing); do not share test questions with other students; and do not consult other students, school personnel, or anyone else during testing.
2. Ensure that students do not access the Internet outside of the secure testing online platform.

Do not give students any assistance or make suggestions for responding to any test question.

1. Test administrators must not coach a student during testing or alter or interfere with a student's response in any way. Examples of coaching include, but are not limited to:
 - a. providing answers to a student
 - b. indicating that a student has answered a question incorrectly or left a question blank
 - c. defining words or providing synonyms

- d. spelling words
 - e. influencing a student’s responses by offering hints, clues, cues, gestures, facial expressions, nods, or changes in voice inflection
 - f. altering, explaining, simplifying, or paraphrasing any test question, reading passage, writing prompt, or multiple-choice answer option
 - g. providing any manner of assistance that could impact a student’s answers, including testing strategies
 - h. suggesting that a student write more on a question, check previous work, or review or reconsider a question
2. At any time during a test session, a test administrator may repeat a portion of the TAM script if necessary, for clarification.

Do not read, view, or change student responses.

Administer Student Accommodations Accurately

Follow proper procedures for administering accommodations to students with disabilities and EL students.

1. Ensure that students are only provided accommodations that are listed specifically for use during RI NGSA testing in an approved IEP or a 504 plan, or that were specifically chosen as accommodations for EL students.
2. Follow guidelines on proper provision of RI NGSA accommodations as prescribed in the [Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual](#).

Testing Irregularities

Testing irregularities are incidents that represent a deviation from prescribed testing procedures. Testing irregularities may include student impropriety, errors in providing accommodations, educator misconduct, or the mishandling of secure test materials.

School Observations

In order to ensure the security and proper administration of the RI NGSA program, announced monitoring visits to schools are required to observe the procedures followed during test administration.

At least two regular classrooms should be visited and at least one accommodation session, if possible. Additional information about school selection and visit procedures are available in the *RI Test Coordinator Handbook* on the RIDE website at www.ride.ri.gov/TC.

Monitoring observers will confirm that all test security requirements in this section are being met, including the following:

- Materials are stored properly.
- Staff have been trained (RIDE may request to see sign-in sheets and training materials).
- Test administrators are administering tests appropriately.
- The testing environment is secure.

Mandatory Reporting of Irregularities by All Personnel

Secure handling protects the integrity, validity, and confidentiality of assessment items and student information. Individuals who have witnessed, been informed of, or suspect the possibility of a test security incident that could potentially affect the integrity of the assessments must report this incident immediately to their school test coordinator. Deviation in test administration must be reported as a test security incident, using the form posted in the [RISAP Test Coordinator’s Handbook](#) to ensure the validity of the assessment results.

All test irregularities must be reported by the test administrator to the school test coordinator. The school test coordinator must collect any information and/or documentation and inform the Local Education Agency (LEA) or district test coordinator. The LEA or district test coordinator must contact RIDE to discuss the incident and provide any documentation, as necessary. RIDE will inform the local LEA/district if it is required to submit a formal investigation report of the irregularity. If any school or district employees with knowledge of a test irregularity has questions about their reporting obligations, RIDE can be consulted. It is recommended that parents/guardians be informed when a student-specific irregularity is reported to RIDE.

When reporting an irregularity to RIDE, the following information should be provided:

- a description of the alleged incident and the date it occurred
- the name of the school involved, along with the district and school code
- the name(s) of the individual(s) involved in the incident
- the specific test(s) and specific session(s) affected
- in student-specific reports: the student’s name, date of birth, grade, and State-Assigned Student Identifier (SSID/SASID)

Requirements of the Test Environment

The test environment refers to all aspects of the testing situation while students are testing and includes what a student can see, hear, or access (including access via technology) at various stages of testing.

Before Testing	
Instructional materials	Instructional materials must be removed or covered, including information that might assist students in answering questions. This includes materials that may be displayed on bulletin boards, chalkboards, dry-erase boards, or charts.
Student seating	Students must be seated with enough space between them to minimize opportunities to look at one another’s work and maintain safe distancing according to health guidance. See task 9 in section C of Part 2 for more information.
Signage	Place a “TESTING—DO NOT DISTURB” sign on the door(s) to the testing locations. If possible, post signs in halls and entrances rerouting hallway traffic to promote optimum testing conditions. A sample sign is provided in Appendix A .
During Testing	
Testing through the Secure Browser	Administration of the RI NGSA is possible only through the Student Interface via the Secure Browser. Students may not access any other programs or websites during testing.
Quiet environment	Provide a quiet environment void of talking or other distractions that might interfere with a student’s ability to concentrate or compromise the testing situation.

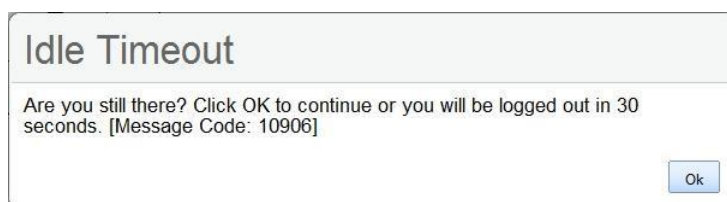
Active proctoring	Monitor the testing process by circulating around the room frequently, maintaining a clear view of students and keeping attention focused on them.
Access to assessments	Only students actively testing can view test items. Students not testing during the session and unauthorized staff must not be in the room where a test is being administered. School Test Coordinators, Technology Coordinators, and Test Administrators may have limited exposure to test items in the course of properly administering the assessments. Test Administrators may not actively review or analyze any test items, except as needed to appropriately administer accommodations to students.
No unauthorized log in to the Online Testing System	Only students may log in to the Student Interface . Students may not use another student’s login credentials. Only adults with an authorized account may log in to the Test Administrator Interface (TA Interface). An adult may not use another person’s login credentials.
No access to digital, electronic, or manual devices	Students must not have access to cell phones or other personal electronic devices during the testing sessions. Test Administrators may have cell phones with them only for the purpose of communicating about assessment administration, if needed. No digital, electronic, or manual device may be used to record or retain test items. Similarly, secure materials must not be discussed with or released to anyone via any media, including fax, email, and social media websites.
No copies of test materials	Unless needed as a print-on-demand or Braille accommodation, no copies of the test items or stimuli may be made or otherwise retained.
No access to responses	Test Administrators are not permitted to review student responses in the testing interface or students’ notes on scratch paper, except as needed to appropriately administer accommodations to students.
After Testing	
No retaining, discussing, or releasing test materials	Descriptions of test items, stimuli, and simulations must not be retained, discussed, or released to anyone.
No test materials used for instructional purpose	Test Administrators must not make any copies, or descriptions, of test items, stimuli, and simulations to retain for instructional purposes.
Destroy secure test materials	All secure materials, including scratch paper, testing tickets, and materials from the print-on-demand accommodation must be destroyed after testing. The only secure test materials not destroyed are paper testing booklets that must be shipped back to the vendor once student responses have been entered into the Data Entry Interface (DEI).

Test Platform Security

Test Timeout Due to Inactivity

As a security measure, students and Test Administrators are automatically logged out of the test after 30 minutes of inactivity. Activity includes selecting an answer or navigation option in the assessment (e.g., clicking **[Next]** or **[Back]** or using the **Questions** drop-down list to navigate to another item). Moving the mouse or clicking on an empty space on the screen is not considered activity.

Before the system logs someone out of the assessment, a warning message will be displayed on the screen. If **[Ok]** is not clicked within 30 seconds after this message appears, the user will be logged out. Clicking **[Ok]** will restart the 30-minute inactivity timer.



Caution: As a security measure, the Test Administrator is automatically logged out after 30 minutes of user inactivity in the session. **This will result in the closing of the test session.** This includes inactivity by both the Test Administrator on the TA interface AND students within a test in the test session.



Note: It is important to write down the **Session ID in the TA Interface.** Using the Session ID, Test Administrators will be able to log back in to the TA Interface and re-activate an idle test session.

Accommodation Requiring Dual Screen Setup

Systems that use a dual monitor setup typically display an application on one monitor screen while another application is accessible on the other screen. Students should NOT take assessments on computers that are connected to more than one monitor except in extremely rare circumstances, such as when a Test Administrator is administering a test for a student who has a read-aloud non-embedded accommodation and wants to have a duplicate screen to view exactly what the student is viewing for ease of reading aloud. In these rare cases where a dual monitor is allowed, it is required that the monitors be set up to “mirror” each other. Technology Coordinators can assist the Test Administrator in setting up the two monitors to ensure they mirror each other rather than operate as independent monitors. In these cases, all security procedures must be followed and the test administered in a secure environment to prevent others from hearing the questions or viewing the student or TA screens (see the [Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual](#) for guidance on administering the read-aloud non-embedded accommodation).

Monitoring Student Progress through the TDS

It is very important that the Test Administrator monitor student progress throughout the test session. The Test Administrator may use the TA Interface to view the testing status of any student. The **Students in Your Test Session** table appears once a Test Administrator has approved students for testing and displays the testing progress for each student logged in to the TA’s session. For a detailed description of this table, view [Appendix B in the TAM](#).