

2020-21 State Assessment FAQ

(updated March 18, 2021)

Scheduling and Planning for State Assessments

1. Q: I'm looking for SAT and PSAT dates.

A: All state assessment schedules are at www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Schedules.

2. Q: What about make-ups [for SAT]? Does that have to happen in the 3-day window?

A: Yes. Make-ups for SAT need to happen in the 3-day window.

3. Q: It was said we could test for different hybrid groups on Monday / Tuesday does this mean we can start the SAT on Monday, April 12th instead of waiting until April 13th [for SAT]?

A: No. You can only test during the posted state assessment windows.

4. Q: We currently sit in rows and we are not allowed to walk up and down the rows. How do you recommend we monitor while they are testing? How will comply with testing requirements while complying with RIDOH COVID guidelines (i.e. student distance in relation to room sizes)?

A: Some test coordinators have mentioned that teachers are not allowed to move between desks during regular instruction due to room size; they can't maintain the required 6' distance. If this is the case, then you should have multiple proctors who can monitor student testing and screens from other parts of the room.

5. Q: Do you have suggestions on how to provide make up testing and keeping stable pods?

A: It depends on how many educators or personnel in your school are part of a student's stable pod. If the test administrator is the only educator with whom that student has interacted as part of a stable pod, you may have to consider how to adjust scheduling so that test administrator is able to provide the assessment to that student (or to a group of students within that same stable pod). Otherwise, any educator within that student's stable pod who meets the qualifications for being a test administrator and who has been trained may administer the test to the student following proper test administration procedures.

6. Q: If students must take RICAS in their stable pods to maintain health and safety practices, is it fair to assume that more time may be required to administer the test to all students since not all students will be in school at the same time? For example, can students who are on a hybrid model take session 1 on one day when they are in school, and then the next group of students take session 1 the following day when they are in school?

A: Yes, the concurrent testing requirement has been adjusted for this year's administration due to the effect that the safe distancing guidelines may have on some schools' ability to have all of their students in a grade level at school at the same time to take the test due to space available and/or stable pods. If your students are on a hybrid schedule, you may administer one session to Group A on one day, and the same session to Group B on the following day (etc.), over as few consecutive days as possible in order to maintain test security.

Logging in to Testing Sites

7. Q: Is the TIDE platform different for PSAT 10 and SAT? Does the PSAT 10 and SAT also use TIDE?

A: Yes, the PSAT 10 and SAT have a different version of the TIDE platform than NGSAT. They are separate; changes made in NGSAT TIDE will not transfer to the PSAT10/SAT TIDE. You cannot give the SAT using the NGSAT TIDE, for example.

8. Q: NGSA: I changed schools and when I log into NGSA TIDE I have the wrong school listed.

A: If you are a *school test coordinator* or *test administrator*, contact your district test coordinator. They are able to edit your user account and assign you to the correct school.

9. Q: NGSA and SAT: This is our school's first time administering the NGSA and SAT and I'm a new test coordinator. Can someone please send me login information?

A: If you are a *school test coordinator*, contact your district test coordinator and they will create an account for you in the NGSA TIDE and the PSAT 10 and SAT TIDE. The PSAT 10 and SAT TIDE is not available to access until March 1.

If you are a *district test coordinator*, email assessment@ride.ri.gov with your request and district name and we will make sure you're added to both of the TIDE systems.

10. Q: RICAS: Will the PearsonAccess^{Next} (PAN) username and password information be disseminated soon to test coordinators?

A: *If you had an account last year:* All users should have received a password reminder notice last fall to reset your password and maintain account access.

If you are a *district test coordinator* who had a login last year, please try to login to PAN now (<https://ri.pearsonaccessnext.com>). If you are unable to login or reset your password, please contact the RICAS Service Center (ricasservicecenter@cognia.org) and they can assist you.

If you are a *school test coordinator* or *other district personnel* contact your district test coordinator to re-enable your account or create one for you. Step-by-step instructions for editing and enabling user accounts can be found in the *Guide to Managing Users in PearsonAccess^{Next}* (www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals or at <https://ri.pearsonaccessnext.com>).

11. Q: RICAS: I didn't get the letter for the RICAS service center. What do I do?

A: The RICAS Service Center letter was mailed on February 1. If you still have not received it, you can contact the RICAS Service Center (ricasservicecenter@cognia.org) or email RIDE at assessment@ride.ri.gov.

12. Q: RICAS: I just tried getting in to PearsonAccess^{Next} (PAN) and I'm getting a message saying I am not authorized or I have been inactive for too long.

A: If you are a *district test coordinator*, please contact the RICAS Service Center at ricasservicecenter@cognia.org.

If you are a *school test coordinator* or *other district administrator*, contact your district test coordinator to re-enable your account or create one for you. Step-by-step instructions for editing and enabling user accounts can be found in the *Guide to Managing Users in PearsonAccess^{Next}* (www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals or at <https://ri.pearsonaccessnext.com>).

13. Q: RICAS: How do we contact you if we do not get access to PearsonAccess^{Next} (PAN)?

A: If you are a *district test coordinator*, please contact the RICAS Service Center at ricasservicecenter@cognia.org. *School test coordinators* and *other district personnel* should contact their district test coordinators if you need an account created or re-enabled.

Step-by-step instructions for editing user accounts can be found in the *Guide to Managing Users in PearsonAccess^{Next}* (www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals or <https://ri.pearsonaccessnext.com>).

Testing Distance Learners & Accountability

Testing Distance Learners

14. Q: Since there is no remote testing option, will distance learning students be excused from RICAS?

A: No, all students who attend Rhode Island public schools, charters, state operated, or who are tuitioned to an outplacement school are expected to participate in the state assessments for their grade level in person, in the school they are enrolled.

15. Q: For those students who are on full distance learning and the parent will not send their student in for testing, will another opportunity for SAT be offered in the fall of 2021 as was this year?

A: No, the October 2020 administration of the SAT was to give seniors an opportunity to get SAT scores because the 2020 state assessments were canceled due to the COVID pandemic.

16. Q: Did I hear correctly... students who are distant learners have to come into the building to take RICAS?

A: Yes. Testing must take place in the school building. We covered some high-level guidance in the general testing policies webinar, specifically about considerations and options for scheduling to maintain stable pods and safe distancing while having distance learning students come to school to test. You can find that recording at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-training and look for RISAP General Policies.

Accountability

17. Q: Can we get a waiver from testing for distance learners so they don't have to test?

A: No, these assessments provide critical information that assist all of us in ensuring equity within our education system especially during these challenging times. RIDE is in the process of requesting accountability relief from the USED regarding identification of new or chronically underperforming districts or schools for this school year. RIDE will also consider any available flexibilities provided by USED.

18. Q: Are participation and attendance being removed from accountability factors this year?

A: RIDE is in the process of requesting accountability relief from the USED regarding identification of new or chronically underperforming districts or schools for this school year. RIDE will also consider any available flexibilities provided by USED.

19. Q: Will schools get an accountability report card and rating this year?

A: RIDE is in the process of requesting accountability relief from the USED regarding identification of new or chronically underperforming districts or schools for this school year. RIDE will also consider any available flexibilities provided by USED.

20. Q: There's the 95% participation rate that's expected for state assessments. What if there's a significant population that refuses to come in despite our best efforts?

A: We know that these are very challenging times and we trust that you will do everything possible to ensure that students are safe in your schools and that families know how important the testing information is to program development, district and school goals, instructional planning, and IEP Plan development. We ask that you make the best effort you can and address families' concerns to ensure they understand that schools are safe and clean and that the information we get from testing is important.

Parent Refusal, Opt-out, and Exemptions

21. Q: What if we have a parent refuse to allow their child to take the test? Is there an opt-out for them?

A: No. RIDE does not have a statewide opt-out policy.

22. Q: For parents who refuse to send their students in because they are distance learners/virtual learners, will those scores count against us?

A: When students don't take the state assessments, then the district and school is missing vital test scores that would be included in the district and school testing data, including the participation rate requirement of 95%. When significant numbers of students are missing, that will affect calculations for accountability. RIDE is in the process of requesting accountability relief from the USED regarding identification of new or chronically underperforming districts or schools for this school year.

23. Q: Has RIDE written a parent letter that we could use to encourage distance learner parents to attend in school testing? Possibly that LEA's could tailor?

A: LEAs and schools are welcome to [download this letter from Commissioner Infante-Green](#) to share with their families about our upcoming state assessments this spring. The letter is posted at www.ride.ri.gov/TC.

24. Q: Is COVID considered a medical excuse for not testing?

A: Our RISAP Test Coordinator Handbook posted at www.ride.ri.gov/TC details the two criteria for medical exemptions: 1) A student is not able to receive any instruction regardless of setting, and 2) the student is unable to participate in any assessment regardless of accommodations available. If a student is at home with COVID, and cannot participate in instruction, then they would meet the criteria.

25. Q: What if a student or class needs to quarantine unexpectedly during their test dates and it extends beyond the testing window?

A: We expanded all of the testing windows to accommodate a two-week quarantine. We encourage all schools to start testing as early in the state window as possible in order to ensure that you can test all students. We also encourage schools to use as much of the testing window as necessary. We have additional scheduling recommendations posted at www.ride.ri.gov/tc and you can contact us at assessment@ride.ri.gov if you need assistance with scheduling.

26. Q: Do distance learning students have to test at their school, or can distance learning students test in alternative locations?

A: If the school or district has buildings or locations that are not currently being used, then those buildings and locations can be considered for testing students. Students cannot be tested in their homes or in locations not owned by the district or school unless the student has that as an accommodation in their IEP.

27. Q: Distance learning students are not in a pod because they are home. Will we have to test these students individually?

A: No, you don't have to test the students individually unless that is something you have the staff and time to do. We provide options for how to schedule distance learning students in our scheduling guidance at www.ride.ri.gov/tc.

Other Questions

28. Q: Is there a link to a practice test?

A: Practice tests for *all* our state assessments can be found at www.ride.ri.gov/released-items.

29. Q: When is the window for the infrastructure trial?

A: Guidance about the infrastructure trial for RICAS can be found in the RICAS Test Coordinator Manual which is posted at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals and also at <http://ricas.pearsonsupport.com> under “Test Administration Guidance”.

Materials

30. Q: Will test coordinator and test administrator manuals be sent to schools or do we download and copy?

A: RICAS test coordinator and test administration manuals will be shipped to schools according to the information provided in the RICAS Test Coordinator presentation posted at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-trainings under “RICAS” and on the Assessment Schedules page at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-schedules under “RICAS”.

NGSA manuals must be downloaded and either distributed digitally or printed and distributed. Manuals can be found at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-trainings or at <https://ri.portal.cambiumast.com/>

SAT and PSAT 10 manuals and other paper test materials will be shipped to schools in mid-March. Additional manuals can be found at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals

DLM manuals can be found at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals

31. Q: Do we order materials for SAT or PSAT 10 or does RIDE do that?

A: Do not use the College Board site to order test materials. The SAT and PSAT 10 are administered digitally for the majority of students so there are no materials to order. For students who require paper tests as an accommodation, that information is taken from the SSD Online and will be used to create a materials order. Homeschooled students must take the paper-based tests and these can be ordered by sending an email to rischoolday@collegeboard.org.

32. Q: NGSA: Will fifth graders need calculators? If so, what type of calculators should we order?

A: There is a calculator built into the test platform (secure browser). If a student is more comfortable with a hand-held calculator, one can be provided so long as it cannot access the internet or doesn't have file storage (see page 21 of the NGSA TAM). Additional information on calculator policies for all assessments can be found in the *Accommodations and Accessibility Features* manual at www.ride.ri.gov/accommodations.

33. Q: How many years do we need to keep the test security agreements?

A: Each test coordinator manual notes the length of time that security agreements need to be kept.

- For RICAS and NGSA, the agreements and PCPA should be kept on file for three years.
- DLM test security agreements are signed electronically and stored in the Kite Educator Portal. A report on who has signed the test security agreements should be run by test coordinators and kept on file for at least one year. Step-by-step instructions for how run the report can be found in the Educator Portal User Guide at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals.

34. Q: Are the certification courses for NGSA up and going now?

A: The TA Certification Course for the Test Delivery System is available through the NGSA Portal (<https://ri.portal.cambiumast.com>).

35. Q: Is there a need for headphones? Audio check?

A: Students who have text-to-speech as an accommodation will need headphones for any state assessment. The audio check for NGSA does not produce sound except for those students who have the TTS form.

Student Registration

36. Q: As a new coordinator, I just want to make sure that I'm not registering the students but the state is?

A: RIDE registered students for all state assessments.

37. Q: What is the date the student data files are accurate for grade level?

A: It depends on the assessment (the upload date is generally noted in the manuals), but enrollment data should be kept as accurate as possible. NGSA and RICAS have a nightly feed that will update within 24-48 hours from the change made in eRIDE. SAT and PSAT 10 will have daily updates and DLM student information can be manually updated in Kite Educator Portal, as needed.

38. Q: To clarify, NGSA doesn't pull from the EL or SPED Censuses, only Enrollment?

A: The enrollment census and EL and SPED census all talk to each other. Our nightly file incorporates information from each - it's just simpler to reference it as the enrollment census since that's where the majority of the student demographic information is found.

39. Q: Are RICAS students updated so we can pull the student file for the PNP?

A: RICAS will be a nightly feed this year from eRIDE (using Enrollment, Special Education, and LEP Census information) to PAN. Once in PAN, students can be exported for PNP purposes. Please note: any changes made to the PNP file for student demographic information will not affect the student information in PAN, those changes can only be made through eRIDE.

40. Q: If student is not properly coded IEP=Y in Enrollment, but IS coded in SpEd Census, will the status in the SpEdCensus prevail in testing upload?

A: The student's information needs to be coded correctly in enrollment or it may not pass, as that is the primary source for the data nightly feeds.

41. Q: Will a nightly feed into PAN cause any issues with Accommodations that are added for students?

A: No. Accommodations information (including paper test format selection) cannot be overwritten by the nightly feed. Demographic information is the only information that would be updated through changes to the student information in the nightly feed.

42. Q: Are the IEP, LEP, 504 indicators taken from Enrollment upload or from the SpEd and EI Censuses respectively? For example, if a student has an IEP in the SpEd Census and is not marked in Enrollment, which will prevail?

A: They are taken from the Special Education Census and the EL census.

Accommodations

43. Q: RICAS: Will a nightly feed into PAN cause any issues with Accommodations that are added for students?

A: No. Accommodations information (including paper test format selection) will not be overwritten by the nightly feed. Demographic information is the only information that can be changed in the nightly feed.

44. Q: Can a student's accommodations be updated in the individual student change section?

A: *RICAS*: Yes. It can either be individual in the student test settings functionality in PAN, or through the file export/import.

NGSA: Student accommodations can be updated manually for NGSA through NGSA TIDE.

SAT and PSAT 10: Student accommodations must be updated manually through the College Board TIDE.

DLM: Accommodations are entered by the teacher in the Personal Needs and Preferences Profile in Kite Educator Portal.

45. Q: If 504 accommodations say that a student has time and a half for all tests--can that include SAT/PSAT -- or does the accommodation have to specifically say time and a half on SAT/PSAT in the 504 plan?

A: No. It can say "extended time". If you want to put in time and one half, that's fine as well.

46. Q: An EL student can take the NGSA as a Spanish paper test?

A: Yes, if the student has the paper test accommodation in their IEP or 504 plan they may take the Spanish version of the NGSA as a paper test. Directions about how to prepare for and administer the paper accommodation for the Spanish version of the NGSA can be found in an appendix of the Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual at www.ride.ri.gov/accommodations.

47. Q: Are blank graphic organizers an option for all students taking RICAS or just for those with accommodations?

A: Blank graphic organizers are only allowed for students with the accommodation "Graphic Organizer" in their IEP. Students who do not have that in their IEP are welcome to use blank scratch paper to draw their own graphic organizer during the test session if they need to.

48. Q: If a student uses the supplemental reference sheet [for RICAS math] and fills in the multiplication table in session 1, can they get the same sheet back with their own writing?

A: Yes, as long as they did not use the sheet for scratch paper or wrote anything else on it but for completing the multiplication table.

49. Q: Are two computers necessary for a scribe?

A: There is information about how to administer a scribe accommodation for RICAS and NGSA in the *Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual*. A dual monitor situation may be best, since there are no "proctor tickets" for NGSA as there are for RICAS, and there are no written items like there are in RICAS which would be typed into a separate computer. Information about how to use a dual monitor setup can be found in the NGSA Test Coordinator Manual.

Test Administrators/Test Administrator Training

50. Q: The test administrator Certification Course, is this for each teacher that administers NGSA?

A: The certification course for NGSA is required for any test administrator giving the NGSA. Test coordinators are recommended to take the course as they may need to access the Test Delivery System.

51. Q: I have a substitute teacher in grade 5. Will she be able to administer the test and get training?

A: If the substitute teacher is a "long term" substitute and will be in the school long enough to be trained and administer the test, then yes, the substitute teacher can administer any state assessments.

52. Q: Can those trainings be conducted virtually?

A: Yes, they can be.

53. Q: Can paraprofessionals/teacher assistants serve as test administrators?

A: Yes, as long as they complete the training requirements.

54. Q: Where can our Technology Coordinator access the technical requirements for devices? Is there a separate training for Technology Coordinators?

A: There is no separate training for technology coordinators but information can be found at www.ride.ri.gov/assessment-manuals.

55. Q: For SAT/PSAT 10 - Can I host the training as the test coordinator or does each teacher need to watch the video/training on their individual College Board account and get their certificate?

A: I believe they need to view the modules on their own accounts so they get their certificates but I will double-check. Sometimes you can view the modules together as long as each teacher takes the quizzes on their own account.

56. Q: Are the certification courses for NGSA up and going now?

A: Yes. The TA Certification Course for the Test Delivery System is available at <https://ri.portal.cambiumast.com>.

SAT Essay

57. Q: College Board announced that they are removing the essay from the SAT after the end of this year. I'm assuming RI will not be able to administer it as well?

A: The essay is still part of the RI SAT as a state assessment for this spring administration, so students taking the SAT are required to complete the essay. If a student does not complete the essay, they will receive a zero for that portion of the SAT. RIDE would announce any decisions regarding inclusion of the essay in future administrations well prior to the administration of the assessment.

58. Q: If a high school test administrator gave the SAT in fall, should they still do the training again if they are proctoring the same test?

A: Yes. The training for a Saturday or school-sponsored SAT or PSAT 10 is different from the training provided for the state assessment administration. All training needs to be repeated each year.

Test Irregularities

59. Q: For PSAT/SAT, both the RIDE form AND the College Board Irregularity Report need to be completed and submitted?

A: No - Just the College Board one.

60. Q: When a student has a phone out during the test. You said collect the phone, remove the student, tell the school coordinator, then the district, then RIDE. The test irregularity form will need to be filled out. Was there another form to fill out?

A: You are correct: the testing irregularity report is the only form to complete.

61. Q: Are tracking sheets, security agreements, etc. in the handbook?

A: Sample materials tracking sheets and test security agreements (and training sign-in forms) are found in the test coordinator manuals for RICAS and NGSA.

Monitoring State Assessments

62. Q: For example, I would be the one walking into classrooms?

A: If you are a school test coordinator and your school is selected for the monitoring process, RIDE will review the process with you during the pre-observation conference call. More information about monitoring visits can be found in the RISAP TC Handbook at www.ride.ri.gov/TC.

63. Q: How many observations are required for school administrators to do for RIDE?

A: RIDE will review this process with school test coordinators during the pre-observation conference call. More information about monitoring visits can be found in the RISAP TC Handbook at www.ride.ri.gov/TC.

Testing Homeschooled Students

64. Q: A student who is homeschooled must have it in their homeschooled plan in order to take the test?

A: Yes, it should be agreed-upon in writing between both the family and the district prior to the student taking the assessment.