



# ASSESSMENT UPDATE

SPRING 2021

## Spring Testing Extended through September

PDE has extended the administration windows for the 2021 PSSA and Spring Keystone Exams to allow testing through September 30, 2021. Schools can administer and return the tests anytime during the initial and extended test windows: PSSA, April 19, 2021 – September 30, 2021; Spring Keystone Exams, May 17, 2021 – September 30, 2021.

School and districts must be aware that all secure assessment materials will be delivered as scheduled for the spring testing windows, regardless of a district's testing plans. PSSA assessment materials arrived on March 29, 2021, and Spring Keystone assessment materials will arrive by May 03, 2021. Each LEA is responsible for securely storing the materials until the tests will be administered.

**Materials cannot be returned to DRC for re-shipment on a later date.**

LEAs that intend to administer the tests in September must make arrangements to account for student mobility within the district. For the PSSA, LEAs should plan to make the grade-specific test materials available at the schools where the students will be enrolled in 2021-22 (e.g., 8th-grade materials may need to move to the high school to allow the 2021-22 freshmen to participate in the 2021 Grade 8 assessments).

**Note:** Administering the assessments online in the fall will eliminate virtually all of the materials-handling challenges. Online test tickets are easily transferable across schools via exports that can be attached to emails or other correspondence.

## Dates on Printed Materials

The cancellation of the 2020 PSSA and Spring Keystone Exams was such that no test materials were shipped to Pennsylvania districts or schools; therefore, no secure test forms or items were exposed to the field. In response to this unique situation, PDE directed that the test materials printed for 2020 should be used intact for the 2021 assessments.

District and School Assessment Coordinators and Test Administrators should be made fully aware that the year "2020" will be printed on the test and answer booklets, and that the coordinator's handbook and the *Directions for Administration Manuals* will contain schedules and references for the cancelled 2020 administration. Only the administrative materials (labels, packing lists, etc.) will display the year 2021.

PDE produced "errata sheets" for both the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* and the *Directions for Administration Manuals* to provide assessment coordinators and administrators with updated dates for all references to the 2020 administration. The errata sheets are available on the DRC INSIGHT Portal (General Information >> Documents) and should be printed and distributed along with the manuals.

**Contact DRC PA Customer Service 1-800-451-7849**  
**Email: [PAcustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com](mailto:PAcustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com)**  
**DRC INSIGHT Portal: [pa.drccdirect.com](http://pa.drccdirect.com)**

## A Time for Online Testing

It's without question that COVID-19 has introduced new logistical challenges for this year's administration of the spring assessments. As districts and schools look for creative approaches to administer the tests safely, many are considering the advantage of being able to deliver some or all of the assessments via the online format. If your LEA has been looking to try online testing, this spring may be the best time to get your start!

The DRC INSIGHT online learning system has been successfully delivering online assessments in Pennsylvania since 2010. DRC's system has grown over the past decade and is widely considered an exceptionally reliable and efficient platform to deliver both the diagnostic and the summative assessments. Nearly two million online assessments were successfully delivered through the DRC INSIGHT system in 2018-2019 to students from across the Commonwealth. We expect that number to increase as more educators and students continue to utilize online resources for a wide variety of instruction and assessment.

DRC boasts a wealth of technical, instructional, and practical resources that provide LEAs with all the information needed to evaluate, prepare, and launch a successful online administration. Our customer service staff is prepared to help you whether you're simply looking for a little more information or if you've decided to try online testing this year. Regardless of the number of students or subjects assessed, we are confident that our expertise and our first-class system will deliver a positive online testing experience for each of your students.

### Administration Training

The training PowerPoints provide assessment coordinators with important information about DRC's systems and processes and can be accessed from the DRC INSIGHT Portal (General Information >> Documents >> Training).

### Software Updates

Annual updates to the DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments software will occur near the end of June. All currently installed versions will be automatically updated. DRC will send additional correspondence as the dates approach.

### Online Testing Myth

A common question asked about online testing is:

*"Do I need to test all my students online?"*

The answer is no, a school can have a mixture of paper and online testers, even at the subject level. For example, a school can administer the online test to a couple of students in one grade for ELA, and all the students in another grade for Mathematics. There are no requirements on the number of students testing online. If you have students who are more computer literate, testing online may be attractive to those students.

*"Two years ago, our district explored online testing with a small group of students. The success of this experience allowed us to expand online assessment to include all students..."*

Ron Hallett  
Warwick SD



### At-Home Testing for the CDT

DRC has continued to offer remote (at-home) testing for the 2020/2021 Classroom Diagnostic Tools. This flexible testing option allows students to access the CDT from a public browser without having their personal testing devices configured to the district's Central Office Services network. If your school or district could benefit from administering the CDT remotely, please contact DRC to help you get started. The DRC INSIGHT Portal also contains full documentation to provide LEAs with a full description of the option as well as a guide for parents or guardians who may be assisting in the administration of an at-home CDT test.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The public URL that is provided to enable remote CDT testing will not work to gain access to the online PSSA and Keystone Exams. The URL is for the CDT only; there are no public URLs for the PSSA or Keystone Exams. PDE policy prohibits remote testing of the summative assessments.

## Opportunity to Learn Survey

The administration of the spring 2021 assessments presents an opportunity for PDE to gain a better understanding of the types of learning models that have been in place across the Commonwealth during the coronavirus pandemic. Such information will be of vital importance as PDE determines how the assessment results should be interpreted and used in the future.

To accomplish this important objective, the spring administrations will include a survey related to students' opportunity to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic. PDE is asking all LEAs to assist in the collection of this data by providing students the opportunity to respond to the survey questions. It should be made clear to the students that

the survey is for research purposes and **will not** impact their results or scores on the assessments.

For students taking the online test, the Opportunity to Learn survey will be administered as part of the online exam. For the paper/pencil tests, schools will need to access the survey and instructions from the DRC INSIGHT Portal (General Information >> Documents >> PDE Procedures and Guidelines). Students will respond to the survey in the 'Supplemental Data Field' on page 3 of their answer booklets.

Because the Supplemental Data Field is different than most bubble-response grids (and because the survey is not considered secure test content), Test Administrators may offer as much assis-

tance as necessary to help the students with understanding the questions and filling in the field. The survey questions can also be read aloud or projected for classroom viewing to provide additional assistance to ensure students are understanding and completing the Supplemental Data Grid.

**DID YOU KNOW?**



Important dates for all PA assessments can be found in the DRC INSIGHT Portal on the Announcements page. This page is updated every time there is a change in a window or deliverable.

All manuals, user guides, and PDE guideline documents are posted to the INSIGHT Portal in the Documents section.

## Winter Keystone Exams

The 2020-2021 Winter Keystone Exams Corrections window is April 20-22, 2021. The District Student Data Files are scheduled to be released on May 7, 2021. Summary Reports will not be produced for the 2020-2021 Winter Keystone Exams .

## Accommodated Online Tools Training

Schools are strongly encouraged to allow their students to practice using the types of tools they will encounter when taking an online assessment. This type of practice is easily accomplished through the Online Tools Training (OTTs) that is available within the DRC INSIGHT testing engine or through a link to a public version found on the DRC INSIGHT Portal welcome page.

It's also important that students who will be taking an accommodated version of the online assessment (color-contrast, audio, video sign language (VSL)) are provided the same opportunity to practice using the tools and the accommodation settings. The audio and color-contrast accommodated versions of the OTTs that can be accessed by adding the word "audio" or "color" after the username (e.g., "math3audio"). If a student needs to practice with the VSL accommodation, the password is either VSLgrades3-5 or VSLgrades6-8 depending on the student's grade level. Please contact the DRC Customer Service team if you need any assistance accessing the accommodated OTTs.