

Appendix A: Methodology

In order to measure the actual time spent on the New York State mandated ELA and math exam days for grades 3 through 8, a statewide survey of teachers and test proctors was conducted. This was a web administered survey, with email invitations.

Sampling

To construct a sampling frame of all the schools in the state, we began with the 2014-15 School Directory and General Information database. This is a database of 7242 schools, publicly available on the NYSED website. First we deleted any records that were non-public schools (1745), leaving 5497 records. Since this file contained both school- and district-level records, we then deleted all district-level records (719), leaving 4778 records. In order to limit the file to the targeted population of

grades 3-8, we then deleted any records coded as Other (2), Pre-K only (9), Senior High Schools (888), and any records with missing data in the grade organization field (65). This left 3814 remaining records – representing our sample frame, the universe – coded as K-12 School (102), Elementary (2600), Middle School (643), Junior High School (121), Junior Senior School (348).

In order to identify teachers to survey, we developed a process for randomly selecting one teacher from each building in the sampling frame. Two fields were added and coded for each record in the file of 3814 school buildings: a name code A-Z and an order code F-L-M. Utilizing these codes, student research assistants visited each district/school website and added a teacher email to the database utilizing the following selection process for teacher emails: the name code alphabetically narrowed the selection to the list of teachers with a last name starting

Table 1

Sampling Frame and Email Sample Construction

	Records
Total records in original SED file	7242
Less non-public schools	-1745
Public schools only	5497
Less district level records	-719
School level records only	4778
Less Schools without 3-8	-964
Schools with 3-8 grades only	3814
Less schools without websites or usable emails	-2171
3-8 schools with websites or usable emails	1647
Less those invited that responded but did not teach or proctor 3-8	-11
3-8 schools usable emails and teacher or proctor	1636
Less non-responders	-1493
Total completed surveys	143

with that letter, e.g if the code was T, all teachers with the last name T (if there were no teachers with the coded letter, the rule was to move to the next letter in the alphabet). Then using the order code, if the record was coded F, we selected the first teacher with a last name starting with the indicated letter code; for a record coded L, we selected the last teacher with a last name starting with the indicated letter code; for a record coded M, we selected the teacher in the middle of the list; if the number of teacher names was even, we flipped a coin: if heads, we selected the teacher closer to the beginning of the list, and if tails, we selected the teacher closer to the end of the list.

As part of this process, we checked to make sure the selected teacher was teaching in the 3-8 grade(s), if not, we selected the next teacher using name/order criteria. If the district had no website or did not make emails available we eliminated that district from our sample list.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was programmed and the sample was managed using Qualtrics web survey software. Data collection began shortly after the spring 2015 state testing weeks, and was conducted May 5, 2015 through August 1, 2015. Teachers were emailed brief information about the survey and invited to participate via an embedded survey link that only they could use and was uniquely attached to their email. Eleven teachers in our sample did not teach or proctor the tests for grades 3-8. Respondents were able to start, stop, and return to the survey link to complete the survey in more than one visit to the survey site. We sent a minimum of two email follow up reminders.

In order to encourage participation, respondents were offered an emailed copy of the report upon release (of which 61 did request). The average time to complete the survey was 10 minutes. Survey participant's responses are kept confidential and all personal identifying information was removed

from data files after data integrity was verified. The total sample size collected was 143 completed interviews, a simple response rate of 8.7 percent.

One unexpected study finding was the lack of school websites with teacher emails in New York City. Overall, 56 percent of schools outside of NYC had readily accessible emails on their sites, as compared to schools in New York City where only 18 percent provided teacher emails. This resulted in our sample being skewed geographically to districts outside of NYC, therefore we weighted the sample to adjust for this. The survey data were weighted to reflect available parameters in the original SED file: grade organization type, and community type.

Questionnaire and Measures

For this study, our primary goal was to measure the amount of time dedicated to the state mandated ELA and math exams' test-related tasks before, during, and after testing, as well as any other non-testing activities requiring time on an average exam day. We also sought to measure any time consumed on the day before for room prep, how many students missed test days due to illness and reasons other than refusal, and teachers' inclination to present new instructional materials on testing days.

The survey was pretested during April, 2015. Ten teachers (who were not in our sample) were emailed an early version of the survey, and were asked to provide feedback on the instrument. As a result of the pretest, the instrument was updated, revised, and improved. Pre-test data were not included in the final dataset.

Our concepts were operationalized in the following ways:

Pre-test related tasks were measured with four variables, teachers were asked to estimate the number of minutes spent on an average test

Table 2

Composition of Entire Sample Universe, and Unweighted and Weighted Survey Data

	Un-weighted N=143	Universe	Weighted N=144	Difference Universe ~ Weighted N
Sub Type				
City	27%	44%	46%	2%
Independent Central	32%	22%	27%	5%
Central	29%	13%	17%	4%
Independent Union Free	8%	11%	7%	-4%
Charter School	1%	5%	1%	-4%
Union Free	3%	4%	2%	-2%
City Central		1%		-1%
Grade Organization				
Elementary	61%	68%	64%	-4%
Middle School	20%	17%	18%	1%
Junior Senior High	10%	9%	9%	0%
Junior High	2%	3%	5%	2%
K12	7%	3%	4%	1%
Community Type				
NYC	10%	36%	33%	-3%
Large	33%	29%	31%	2%
Small	33%	18%	19%	1%
Medium	24%	17%	17%	0%

day on: room preparation; location changes; counting and distributing exams; and the delivery of instructions.

Actual test taking was measured with a single variable, teachers were asked to estimate the number of minutes spent on actual testing.

Post-test related tasks were measured with three variables, teachers were asked to estimate the number of minutes spent on an average test day on: collecting, counting, and securing exams; location changes; breaks and reorientation time to transition to non-testing related tasks.

Day before prep was measured with a single variable, teachers were asked to estimate the number of minutes spent preparing the room for testing conditions on the days preceding the exams.

Pre-, post-, actual test taking, and day before prep were measured independently for both ELA and math test days, and are reported on individually and then combined for overall averages.

Non-testing activities were measured with six variables, teachers were asked to estimate the number of minutes spent on an average test day on: actual instruction, outside play, free

time in class, classroom celebration, movies, lunch/recess.

Missed days was measured with a single variable, teachers were asked to estimate the percentage of students who missed at least one regular test day (not due to refusal, but due, for example, to illness).

New content was measured with a single ordinal variable, teachers were asked about their likelihood (more/less/equally) to provide instruction on new content on testing days as opposed to non-testing days.

Lastly, there were two open ended questions at the end of the survey which provided respondents the opportunity to voice: 1. any additional comments about the state testing process, and 2. feedback about the survey.

The entire survey instrument with email invitation and full question wording is available in Appendix B.

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Email Invitation

SUNY New Paltz is conducting a study about the administration of New York State testing in grades 3-8. You have been randomly selected, from a pool of all grade 3-8 teachers in New York State, to participate in this study. We invite you to take part in a brief, less than 10 minute survey on this topic. Your responses will help us better understand the realities of required 3-8 testing in New York State.

Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and reported only in the aggregate. Only the researchers on this study will have access to your specific responses and all personally identifying information will be stripped from the data file. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary.

Please call Robin Jacobowitz at [845.257.3228](tel:845.257.3228) if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you in advance,

Robin Jacobowitz, Director, Education Projects
KT Tobin, Associate Director, CRREO

Follow this link to the Survey: {unique to email address survey link}

Survey

Q1 The Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach (CRREO) at SUNY New Paltz is conducting a study about the administration of New York State testing in grades 3-8. You have been randomly selected, from a pool of all grade 3-8 teachers in New York State, to participate in this study. We invite you to take part in a brief, less than ten minute survey on this topic. Your responses will help us better understand the realities of required 3-8 testing in New York State. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and reported only in the aggregate. Only the researchers on this study will have access to your specific responses and all personally identifying information will be stripped from the data file. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary.

You may need to scroll or page down to see all of the questions on each screen. When you are done with a screen, click the "next page" button in the lower right on your screen to continue. If you start the survey, but you need more time to finish it, close the browser ("X" out) to exit the survey. At a later time you can go back to the survey and complete it by just clicking on the link in the original email invite. The software will bring you back to the screen you previously left.

At the end of the survey, you will have the option of registering to receive a copy of our final report when it is released.

Please call Robin Jacobowitz at 845.257.3228 if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your time.

Q2 Which grade(s) do you currently teach? (Select all that apply)

- 3rd Grade
- 4th Grade
- 5th Grade
- 6th Grade
- 7th Grade
- 8th Grade
- Do not teach 3-8, but did proctor state exams in April 2015
- Do not teach, and did not proctor, any state exams for any students in grades 3-8 in 2015

—> Thank you for your interest in participating in our survey. For this study, we are only including teachers who proctored state exams in grades 3-8. Please select "End Survey" to be taken to the final page.

Q3 Did you proctor or administer NYS exams in spring 2015?

- Yes
- No

—> Thank you for your interest in participating in our survey. For this study, we are only including teachers/proctors who administered the state ELA and Math exams in spring 2015. Select "End Survey" to be taken to final page.

Q4 Which title(s) best describes your position? (Select all that apply)

- General Education Teacher
- Special Education Teacher (Most of your day spent in an inclusion or co-teaching class)
- Special Education Teacher (Most of your day spent in self-contained class)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)/Bilingual Teacher
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Teacher
- Other, Please Specify _____

Q5 The next few questions are about the time that it takes to set-up, administer, and conclude testing on one typical day of administration.

To the best of your recollection, please think back to ONE typical day of administration of the **ELA** state test and quantify the time spent -- in MINUTES -- on that activity for ONE typical day. Your best estimates are fine.

The total line will add to the total number of testing-related minutes in a typical **ELA** administration day.

- _____ Preparing the classroom (or testing location) for testing conditions (e.g. moving desks)
- _____ Moving students to appropriate locations (including for testing accommodations, test refusals, etc.)
- _____ Settling students in their seats, counting and distribution of test materials
- _____ Delivery of test instructions
- _____ Actual test-taking
- _____ Collecting, counting and securing exams
- _____ Returning refusing students back into the classroom
- _____ Giving students a break after the test/resetting and reorienting students back to classroom activities
- _____ Any other testing-related activity before, during, or after administration of the test.
Please specify: _____

Q6 If you did any preparing of the classroom (or testing location) for testing conditions on the days preceding the **ELA** exams, please note the number of minutes here: _____ minutes

Q7 The next few questions are about the time that it takes to set-up, administer, and conclude testing on one typical day of administration.

To the best of your recollection, please think back to ONE typical day of administration of the **Math** state test and quantify the time spent -- in MINUTES -- on that activity for ONE typical day. Your best estimates are fine.

The total line will add to the total number of testing-related minutes in a typical **Math** administration day.

- _____ Preparing the classroom (or testing location) for testing conditions (e.g. moving desks)
- _____ Moving students to appropriate locations (including for testing accommodations, test refusals, etc.)
- _____ Settling students in their seats, counting and distribution of test materials
- _____ Delivery of test instructions
- _____ Actual test-taking
- _____ Collecting, counting and securing exams
- _____ Returning refusing students back into the classroom
- _____ Giving students a break after the test/resetting and reorienting students back to classroom activities
- _____ Any other testing-related activity before, during, or after administration of the test. Please specify: _____

Q8 If you did any preparing of the classroom (or testing location) for testing conditions on the days preceding the **Math** exams, please note the number of minutes here: _____ minutes

Q10 On a typical test day, thinking about non-testing activities, what kinds of activities do your students engage in before or after the testing? Again, as before, please try to estimate, -- in MINUTES --, how much time is spent on each of these activities.

- _____ Instruction
- _____ Outside play
- _____ Free time in class
- _____ Classroom celebration
- _____ Movie
- _____ Lunch / recess
- _____ Other. Please specify: _____

Q11 How likely are you to provide instruction on new content on testing days as opposed to non-testing days?

- Less likely
- Equally likely
- More likely

Q12 What percent of your students missed at least one regular test day (not due to refusal, but due, for example, to illness) and needed to complete them on make-up days? Your best estimate is fine.

Percent of students who missed at least one regular test day: _____

Please use the space below to add any additional comments you might have about the state testing process.

Please use this space to provide any feedback about our survey.

Thank you for completing our survey! Your participation is greatly appreciated! If you would like to be emailed a copy of our study, please provide your preferred email below. (This email will be kept in a separate file and will not be attached to any of your survey responses). Please provide email here if you would like to receive a copy of the study report.: _____

Appendix C: Works Cited

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