

The Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment

2023–2024

Volume 5: Test Administration



RIDE

Rhode Island
Department
of Education

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1. TEST ADMINISTRATION

1.1 TESTING WINDOWS

The 2023–2024 The Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment (RI NGSA) testing windows spanned approximately one month for the summative assessment in Rhode Island. The paper-pencil fixed-form tests for summative assessments were administered concurrently during the online summative window.

1.2 TEST OPTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES

The Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment (RI NGSA) was administered primarily online. To ensure that all eligible students in the tested grades were given the opportunity to take the 2023–2024 summative assessments, several options were available to accommodate students' needs. Table 1 lists the testing options that were offered for the 2023–2024 test administration. Once a testing option was selected, it applied to all tests in the content area.

Table 1. Summary of Tests and Testing Options in 2023–2024

Assessments	Testing Options	Test Mode
Summative	English	Online
	Braille	Online
	Spanish (Toggle)	Online
	Paper-Pencil Large Print Fixed-Form Test*	Paper-Pencil
	Paper-Pencil Braille Fixed-Form Test*	Paper-Pencil
	Paper-Pencil Fixed-Form Test*	Paper-Pencil

*Note. For the paper-pencil fixed-form tests, all student responses were entered into the Data Entry Interface (DEI) by test administrators (TAs).

To ensure standardized administration conditions and that teachers (TEs) and TAs follow procedures outlined in the *Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment Test Administration Manual* (TAM), TEs and TAs were required to review the TAM prior to the beginning of testing to ensure that the testing room was prepared appropriately (e.g., removing certain classroom posters, arranging desks). Make-up procedures were established for any students who were absent on testing day(s). TEs and TAs followed required administration procedures and directions and read the boxed directions verbatim to students, ensuring standardized administration conditions.

1.2.1 Administrative Roles

The key personnel involved with the test administration for the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) are district administrators (DAs), school test coordinators (SCs), TEs, and TAs. The main responsibilities of these key personnel are described in the following subsections. More detailed descriptions can be found in the TAM provided online at: <https://ri.portal.cambiumast.com/resources>.

District Administrator

The DA may add users with DC roles in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE). For example, a director of special education may need DC privileges in TIDE to access district-level data for the purposes of verifying test settings for designated supports and accommodations. DAs have the same test administration responsibilities as DCs; their primary responsibility is to coordinate the administration of the RI NGSA in their district.

District Test Coordinator

In Rhode Island, the activities listed in this subsection are the responsibility of the DA for the RI NGSA.

DAs are responsible for the following tasks:

- Reviewing all RI NGSA policies and test administration documents
- Reviewing scheduling and test requirements with SCs, TEs, and TAs
- Working with SCs and technology coordinators (TCs) to ensure that all systems, including Cambium Assessment, Inc.’s (CAI) Secure Browser, are properly installed and functional
- Importing users (including SCs, TEs, and TAs) into TIDE
- Verifying all student information and eligibility in TIDE
- Scheduling and administering training sessions for all SCs, TEs, TAs, and TCs
- Ensuring that all personnel are trained on how to properly administer the RI NGSA
- Monitoring the secure administration of the tests
- Investigating and reporting all testing improprieties, irregularities, and breaches reported by the TEs and TAs
- Attending to any secure material according to RIDE policies

School Test Coordinator

The SC is primarily responsible for coordinating the administration of the RI NGSA at the school level and ensuring that testing within his or her school is conducted in accordance with the test procedures and security policies established by the RIDE. SC responsibilities include the following:

- Establishing a testing schedule with DAs, DCs, TEs, and TAs based on test administration windows
- Working with technology staff to ensure timely computer setup and installation
- Working with TEs and TAs to review student information in TIDE to ensure that student information and test settings for designated supports and accommodations are correctly applied

- Identifying students who may require designated supports and test accommodations and ensuring that procedures for testing these students follow RIDE policies
- Attending all district trainings and reviewing all RIDE policies and test administration documents
- Ensuring that all TEs and TAs attend school or district trainings and review online training modules posted on the portal
- Establishing secure and separate testing rooms, if needed
- Downloading and planning the administration of classroom activity with TEs and TAs
- Monitoring secure administration of the tests
- Monitoring testing progress during the testing window and ensuring that all students participate, as appropriate
- Investigating and reporting all testing improprieties, irregularities, and breaches reported by the TEs and TAs
- Attending to any secure material according to RIDE policies

Teacher

A TE who is responsible for administering the RI NGSA must have the same qualifications and test administration responsibilities as a TA. This role may be assigned to teachers who do not administer the test, but who will need access to student results. TEs can view their own students' results when they are made available.

Test Administrator

A TA is primarily responsible for administering the RI NGSA. The TA's role does not allow access to student results and is designed for TAs, such as technology staff, who administer tests but do not have access to student results.

TAs are responsible for the following:

- Completing RI NGSA test administration training
- Reviewing all RIDE policy and test administration documents before administering any RI NGSA assessments
- Viewing student information before testing to ensure that a student receives the proper test with the appropriate supports
- Reporting any potential data errors to SCs and DCs, as appropriate
- Administering the RI NGSA assessments
- Reporting all potential test security incidents to the SCs and DCs in a manner consistent with RIDE and district policies

1.2.2 Online Test Administration

Schools can set testing schedules within Rhode Island’s testing windows, allowing students to test in intervals (e.g., multiple sessions) rather than in one long test period, which minimizes the interruption of classroom instruction and efficiently uses its facility. With online testing, schools do not need to handle test booklets and address the storage and security problems inherent in large shipments of materials to a school site.

SCs oversee all aspects of testing at their schools and serve as the main point of contact, while TEs and TAs administer the online assessments only. TEs and TAs are trained in the online testing requirements and the mechanics of starting, pausing, and ending a test session. Training materials for test administration are provided online.

To start a test session, the TE or TA must first enter the TA Interface of the online testing system using his or her own computer. A session ID is generated when the test session is created. Students who are taking the assessment with the TE or TA must enter their Statewide Student Identifier (SSID), first name, and session ID into the Student Interface using computers provided by the school. The TE or TA then verifies that the students are taking the appropriate assessments with the appropriate accommodations and accessibility feature(s) (see Section 5, Online Testing Features and Testing Accommodations, for a list of accommodations). Students can begin testing only when the TA or TE confirms the settings. The TA or TE then reads the text in the *Administer the Session* section in the Rhode Island TAM aloud to the student(s) and guides them through the login process.

In Rhode Island, students are *not* required to respond to all test questions on a page before proceeding to the next page or to respond to all items before submitting the test. Students are allowed to scroll back to review and edit previously answered items as long as these items are in the same test session and this session has not been paused for more than 20 minutes.

During an active online test session, if a student reviews and changes the response to a previously answered item, then all items that follow to which the student already responded remain the same. If a student changes the answers, no new items are assigned. For example, a student pauses for 10 minutes after completing Item 10. After the pause, the student goes back to Item 5 and changes the answer. If the response change in Item 5 changes the item score from wrong to right, the student’s overall score will improve; however, there will be no change in Items 6–10.

The summative assessment is delivered in two separate sessions. The online assessment must be completed within 45 calendar days of the start date or the assessment opportunity will expire. During a test session, TEs or TAs may pause the test for a student or group of students to take a break. It is up to the TEs or TAs to determine an appropriate stopping point; however, to ensure the integrity of test scores and testing, the online test cannot be paused for more than 20 minutes. If that happens, the student must restart a new test session, which starts from where the student left off. The viewing and editing of previous responses are no longer available.

The TAs or TEs must remain in the room at all times during a test session to monitor student testing. Once the test session ends, the TAs or TEs must ensure that each student has successfully logged out of the system. Then, the TAs or TEs must collect any handouts or scratch paper that students used during the assessment and send these materials for secure shredding.

1.2.3 Paper-Pencil Test Administration

The paper-pencil versions of the RI NGSA are provided as an accommodation for students who do not have access to a computer and for students who are visually impaired.

The DA (Rhode Island) must order the accommodated test materials on behalf of the students who need to take the paper-pencil test via TIDE. Based on the paper-pencil orders submitted in TIDE, the testing contractor ships the appropriate test booklets and the paper-pencil TAM to the district.

After the student has completed the assessment, the TEs and TAs enter the student responses into the DEI and return the test booklets to the testing vendor. The tests submitted via the DEI are then scored.

1.2.4 Braille Test Administration

The fixed-form science braille test is available with the same test blueprint as the regular print science test.

The braille interface is as follows:

- The braille interface includes a text-to-speech (TTS) component for mathematics consistent with the read-aloud assessment accommodation. The Job Access With Speech (JAWS) screen-reading software provided by Freedom Scientific is an essential component that students use with the braille interface.
- Science items are presented to students in Unified English Braille (UEB) Contracted with Technical Braille Code.

Before administering the online summative assessments using the braille interface, TEs or TAs must ensure that technical requirements are met. These requirements apply to the student's computer, the TE's or TA's computer, and any supporting braille technologies used in conjunction with the braille interface.

2. TRAINING AND INFORMATION FOR TEST COORDINATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

District administrators (DAs), district test coordinators (DCs), and school test coordinators (SCs) oversee all aspects of testing at their schools and serve as the main points of contact, while teachers (TEs) and test administrators (TAs) administer the online assessments. The online Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) TA Certification Course, webinars, user guides, manuals, and training sites are used to train TEs and TAs in the online testing requirements and the mechanics of starting, pausing, and ending a test session. Training materials for test administration can be found on the [Rhode Island Resources](#) pages online.

2.1 ONLINE TRAINING

Multiple online training opportunities are offered to key staff.

2.1.1 TA Certification Course

CAI’s online TA Certification Course is available to any user in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE). This web-based course is about 30–45 minutes long and covers information on testing policies and steps for administering a test session in the online system. The course is interactive, requiring participants to start test sessions under different scenarios. Throughout the training and at the end of the course, participants are required to answer multiple-choice questions about the information provided.

2.1.2 Practice Site

In October 2018, a practice site was opened for TEs, TAs, and students. TEs and TAs could practice administering assessments and starting and ending test sessions on the TA Training Site, and students could practice taking a short online assessment on the Student Practice and Training Site. A student could log in directly to the Student Practice and Training Site as a guest without a TA-generated test session ID, or the student could log in through a practice test session created by the TE or TA.

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessment practice tests contained the same item types (e.g., stand-alone items, item clusters) students encountered on the Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessments (RI NGSA) summative assessments. The practice tests were designed to provide students and teachers with opportunities to quickly familiarize themselves with the software and navigational tools they would use for the upcoming summative assessments. Practice tests were organized by grades (i.e., grades 5, 8, and 11). The practice test was refreshed in August 2021.

2.1.3 Manuals and User Guides

The following manuals and user guides are available on the Rhode Island portal: <https://ri.portal.cambiumast.com>.

The *Test Coordinator Manual* (TCM) provides information for DAs, DCs, and SCs regarding policies and procedures for the 2024 RI NGSA summative assessments.

The *Test Administration Manual* (TAM) provides information for TEs and TAs administering the RI NGSA online summative assessments. It includes screen captures and step-by-step instructions on how to administer the online tests.

The *Assistive Technology Manual* provides technical specification information and additional configuration instructions for assistive technology tools that can be used by students with special accessibility needs for online testing. It includes information for testing with Predictive Text tools, Alternative Computer Input tools, Assistive Keyboard tools, Screen Magnifier tools, Voice Packs, and braille technology.

The *Quick Guide for Setting Up Online Testing Technology* acts as a “driver” document for technology coordinators (TCs) to set up TA and student workstations and configure network and assistive technologies.

The *TIDE User Guide* is designed to help users navigate TIDE. Users can find information on managing user account information; student account information; student test settings and accommodations; appeals; and voice packs.

The *TA User Guide* is designed to help users navigate the Test Delivery System (TDS), including the Student Interface and the TA Interface, and help TEs and TAs manage and administer online testing for students.

The *Student Interface Guide to TDS* is designed to provide an overview of the student experience in the TDS for the RI NGSA assessments.

The *Centralized Reporting System User Guide* provides instructions and support for users viewing assessment performance reports in the Centralized Reporting System (CRS).

All manuals and user guides pertaining to the 2023-2024 online testing were available on the portal, and DAs, DCs, and SCs used the manuals and user guides to train TAs and TEs in test administration policies and procedures.

2.1.4 Brochures and Quick Guides

The following brochures and quick guides are available on the Rhode Island portal: <https://ri.portal.cambiumast.com>.

How to Access the Data Entry Interface: This brochure describes how to access the Data Entry Interface (DEI) to submit the RI NGSA paper-pencil tests.

User Role Permissions for Online Systems Brochure: This brochure outlines the user roles and permissions for each secure online testing system used to administer the online assessments. These systems include: TIDE, the TA Interface, the DEI, the Assessment Viewing Application (AVA), and the Reporting System.

Understanding and Creating Rosters: This brochure outlines how to create rosters, which are groups of students associated with a teacher in a particular school. Rosters typically represent entire classrooms in lower grades, or individual classroom periods in upper grades. This document provides instructions for how to create, view, and modify rosters in TIDE and in the Reporting System.

2.2 DISTRICT TEST COORDINATOR TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Test coordinator trainings were held February 6th and 7th in person, and a virtual webinar on March 5th for Rhode Island. Training was provided for the administration of the RI NGSA assessment. During the training, DAs and DCs were provided with information to support training of the SCs, TEs, and TAs.

3. TEST SECURITY

All test items, test materials, and student-level testing information are considered secure materials for all assessments. The importance of maintaining test security and the integrity of test items is stressed throughout the webinar trainings and in the user guides, modules, and manuals. Features

in the testing system also protect test security. This section describes system security, student confidentiality, and policies on testing improprieties.

3.1 STUDENT-LEVEL TESTING CONFIDENTIALITY

All secure websites and software systems enforce role-based security models that protect individual privacy and confidentiality in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other federal laws. Secure transmission and password-protected access are basic features of the current system and ensure authorized data access. All aspects of the system—including item development and review, test delivery, and reporting—are secured by password-protected logins. Our systems use role-based security models that ensure that users can access only the data to which they are entitled and can edit data only in accordance with their user rights.

The following are the three dimensions related to ensuring that students are accessing appropriate test content:

1. *Test eligibility* refers to the assignment of a test to a particular student.
2. *Test accommodation* refers to the assignment of a test setting to specific students based on needs.
3. *Test session* refers to the authentication process of a teacher (TE) or test administrator (TA) creating and managing a test session, the TE or TA reviewing and approving a test (and its settings) for every student, and the student signing on to take the test.

FERPA prohibits public disclosure of student information or test results. The following are examples of prohibited practices:

- Providing login information (username and password) to other authorized Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) users or to unauthorized individuals
- Sending a student's name and Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) together in an email message; if information must be sent via email or fax, include only the SSID number, not the student's name
- Having students log in and test under another student's SSID

Test materials and score reports should not be exposed to identify student names with test scores except by authorized individuals with an appropriate need to know.

All students, including homeschooled students, must be enrolled or registered at their testing schools in order to take the online, paper-pencil, or braille assessments. In Rhode Island, student enrollment information, including demographic data, is generated using a Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) file; data are uploaded nightly via a secured file transfer site to TIDE.

Students log in to the online assessment using their legal first name, SSID, and a test session ID. Only students can log in to an online test session; TEs, TAs, proctors, or other personnel are not permitted to log in to the system on behalf of students, although they are permitted to assist students

who need help logging in. For the paper-pencil versions of the assessments, TEs and TAs are required to affix the student label to the student’s answer document.

After a test session, only staff with the administrative roles of DA, district test coordinator (DC), school test coordinator (SC), or TE can view their students’ scores. TAs do not have access to student scores.

3.2 SYSTEM SECURITY

The objective of system security is to ensure that all data are protected and accessed appropriately by the designated user groups. System security focuses on protecting and maintaining data and system integrity as intended, including ensuring that all personal information is secured, that transferred data (whether sent or received) is not altered in any way, that the data source is known, and that only a specific, designated user can perform any service.

As described in Section 2.2, District Test Coordinator Training Workshops, all DAs, DCs, SCs, TAs, and TEs have defined roles and levels of access to the testing system. DAs are responsible for selecting and entering the DC’s and SC’s information into TIDE, and the SC is responsible for entering TA and TE information into TIDE. Throughout the year, the DA, DC, and SC are also expected to delete in TIDE any information for staff members who have transferred to other schools, resigned, or no longer serve as TAs or TEs.

We employ password protection for any data that may need to be accessed. All access points by different roles—at the state, district, school-principal, and school-staff levels—require a password to log in to the system. Newly added SCs, TAs, and TEs receive separate passwords assigned by the school through their personal email addresses.

Cambium Assessment, Inc.’s (CAI) Secure Browser provides a key layer of protection. The main role of the technology coordinator (TC) is to ensure that the Secure Browser is properly installed on the computers used for the administration of the online assessments. Developed by the testing contractor, the Secure Browser prevents students from accessing other computers or Internet applications and from copying test information. The assessments can be accessed only through the Secure Browser and not by other Internet browsers. The Secure Browser suppresses access to commonly used browsers, such as Internet Explorer and Firefox, and prevents students from searching for answers on the Internet or communicating with other students.

3.3 SECURITY OF THE TESTING ENVIRONMENT

3.3.1 Duties of Testing Personnel

The SCs, TEs, and TAs work together to determine appropriate testing schedules based on the number of computers available, the number of students in each tested grade, and the average amount of time needed to complete each assessment.

Testing personnel are reminded in the online training and user manuals that assessments should be administered in testing rooms that do not crowd students. Good lighting, ventilation, and freedom from noise and interruption are important factors to consider when selecting testing rooms.

TEs and TAs must establish procedures to maintain a quiet environment during each test session and recognize that some students may finish quicker than others. If students are allowed to leave

the testing room when they finish, TEs or TAs are required to explain the procedures for leaving and where students are expected to report once they leave without disrupting others. If students are expected to remain in the testing room until the end of the session, TEs or TAs are encouraged to prepare some quiet work for students to do after they finish the assessment.

If a student needs to leave the room for a brief time during testing, the TAs or TEs are required to pause the student's assessment. For the online computer test, if the pause lasts longer than 20 minutes, the student can continue with the rest of the assessment in a new test session, but the system will not allow the student to return to the items answered before the pause. This measure is implemented to prevent students from using the time outside of the testing room to look up answers.

3.3.2 Room Preparation

The room should be prepared prior to the start of the test session. Any information displayed on bulletin boards, chalkboards, or charts that students might use to help answer test questions should be removed or covered. This rule applies to rubrics, vocabulary charts, student work, posters, graphs, content-area strategies charts, and other materials. The testing personnel's and students' phones must be turned off and stored in the testing room out of sight. TAs are encouraged to minimize access to the testing rooms by posting signs in halls and entrances in order to promote optimum testing conditions; they should also post "TESTING—DO NOT DISTURB" signs on the doors of testing rooms.

3.3.3 Seating Arrangements

TEs and TAs should provide adequate space between students' seats. Students should be seated so that they will not be tempted to look at the answers of others. Because the online test has a linear-on-the-fly test (LOFT) design, it is unlikely that students will see the same test questions as other students. However, through appropriate seating arrangements, students should be discouraged from communicating with each other.

3.3.4 After the Test

At the end of the test session, TEs or TAs must walk through the classroom to pick up any scratch paper that students used and any papers that display students' SSIDs and names together. These materials should be securely shredded or stored in a locked area immediately following a test session.

For the paper tests or any items printed using the print-on-demand feature, specific instructions on how to package and secure the test booklets to be returned to the testing contractor's office are provided in the *Test Administration Manual* (TAM).

3.3.5 Test Security Violations

Everyone who administers or proctors the assessments is responsible for understanding the test administration security procedures. Prohibited practices as detailed in the *Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment TAM* are categorized into the following three groups:

1. *Impropriety*: This is a test security incident that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test, test security, or test validity (for example: student[s] leaving the testing room without authorization).
2. *Irregularity*: This is a test security incident that impacts an individual or group of students who are testing and may potentially affect student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. These circumstances can be contained at the local level (e.g., disruption during the test session, such as a fire drill).
3. *Breach*: This is a test security incident that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Breaches require immediate attention and escalation to the RIDE. Examples include situations such as exposure of secure materials or a repeatable security/system risk. These circumstances have external implications (e.g., administrators modifying student answers, students sharing test items through social media).

District and school personnel are required to document all test security incidents in the test security incident log. The log serves as the document of record for all test security incidents and should be maintained at the district level and submitted to the RIDE at the end of testing.

4. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

4.1 ELIGIBILITY

All students (including retained students) currently enrolled in grades 5, 8, and 11 at public schools in Rhode Island are required to participate in the Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessments (RI NGSA). Students must be tested in the enrolled grade assessment; out-of-grade-level testing is not allowed for the administration of summative assessments.

4.2 HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS

Students who are homeschooled may participate in the RI NGSA assessments at the request of their parent or guardian. Schools must provide these students with one testing opportunity for each relevant content area, if requested.

4.3 EXEMPT STUDENTS

Students who have a significant medical emergency are exempt from participating in the RI NGSA assessments.

5. ONLINE TESTING FEATURES AND TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

In Rhode Island, the *Rhode Island State Assessment Program (RISAP) Comprehensive Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* (hereafter referred to as the *Manual*) is intended for school-level personnel and decision-making teams, including Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Section 504 Plan teams, as they prepare for and implement the Rhode Island Next

Generation Science Assessment (RI NGSA). The *Manual* provides information for classroom teachers (TEs), English language development educators, special education teachers, and instructional assistants to use in selecting and administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for those students who need them. The *Manual* is also intended for assessment staff and administrators who oversee the decisions that are made in instruction and assessment.

The *Manual* applies to all students. It emphasizes an individualized approach to the implementation of assessment practices for those students who have diverse needs and participate in large-scale content assessments, focusing on universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for the RI NGSA. At the same time, the *Manual* supports important instructional decisions about accessibility and accommodations for students who participate in the RI NGSA.

The summative assessments contain accessibility features and accommodations in both embedded and non-embedded versions. Embedded resources are part of the computer administration system, whereas non-embedded resources are provided outside of that system.

State-level users, district administrators (DAs), and school test coordinators (SCs) have the ability to set embedded and non-embedded designated supports and accommodations based on their specific user role. Accommodations must be set in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) before starting a test session.

All embedded and non-embedded accessibility features will be activated for use by all students during a test session. One or more of the pre-selected accessibility features can be deactivated by a TE or test administrator (TA) in the TA Interface of the testing system for a student who may be distracted by the ability to access a specific tool during a test session.

For additional information about the availability of accessibility features and accommodations, refer to the *Manual* for complete information.