



New York State  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

# **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts Computer-based Testing Update**

**Standards & Assessment Workgroup  
April 2019**

# CBT in New York

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**2019 represents the third year that operational computer-based testing has been an option for schools to administer Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests.**

**2017: 184 schools, over 28,000 students**

**2018: 650+ schools, over 145,000 students**

**2019: 1,160+ schools, over 300,000 students**

# Timeline of Week 1

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- April 1** Over 36,000 students submitted test sessions on computer
- April 2** 93,100 students started test sessions, 86,500 (93%) successfully submitted tests. Technical difficulties prevented some students from submitting their test sessions on that day.
- April 3** CBT non-Testing Day
- April 4** Testing resumed for Grades 5 & 8, over 73,000 students successfully submitted test sessions.
- April 5** Over 58,000 students submitted test sessions on computer.

# April 2 Technical Details

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- Questar's database servers ran out of free memory due to a high frequency of transactions occurring on the servers for which the servers were not equipped.
- This caused two primary problems for users: temporary inability to submit completed test sessions and delays for others in logging into the testing system to begin testing.
- Questar's diagnosis of the issue was confirmed by ETS and Microsoft Professional Services.

# Overnight Corrections to the System

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Questar developed a corrective action plan, which was reviewed and validated by both ETS and Microsoft at the Department's direction.

Questar:

1. Significantly increased memory for its database servers
2. Enhanced the capabilities of its databases
3. Significantly increased the number of student transactions the servers could process at one time
4. Removed all non-essential servers from the production environment

# Going Forward

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**Today, Monday, April 8, CBT resumed full tilt for all grades and will continue through Friday, April 12, as schools wrap up CBT ELA sessions.**

**Math tests will be available on computer as planned**

**NYSED's team has been in continuous contact with schools to provide guidance and hear their concerns.**

**The partnership and support from districts, schools, RICs, BOCES and our CBT workgroups has been invaluable.**

# Going Forward

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**As in 2017 and 2018, we will conduct a comparability study to review the computer- and paper-based results. We will make the appropriate adjustments to student scores as we did the last two years to ensure that no school is penalized for participating in CBT.**

**NYSED is reviewing Questar's contract to determine actions to hold Questar accountable for their failure to deliver reliable and seamless computer-based assessments in New York State.**

**We have also provided additional flexibility to schools by extending the scoring window and working directly with scoring consortia to address their needs for additional time.**