

Fall 2020 Testing: Technology Considerations

As Ohio's students and educators work through the unique challenges of the new school year, many questions regarding state testing requirements have been raised—specifically with the Ohio State Tests (OSTs) and end-of-course (EOC) exams. These tests are required by federal and/or state law and, at this point in time, are still required for the 2020-21 school year.

One of the challenges involves the administration of these tests to students who are receiving instruction remotely—either completely remotely or in a hybrid model with some instruction conducted remotely. We can break this challenge into two parts: technology preparation and the actual test administration.

Technology preparation. The key task for technology preparation is ensuring that the current version of the secure browser or app is installed on all devices to be used for testing. The new secure browsers for 2020-2021 were released in July, a time of year when districts typically can use the rest of the summer to prepare devices for the new school year. Ideally, many districts were able to use that time to update the devices with the current secure browser before distributing them for students' remote or hybrid learning. For those who were able to do so, no additional preparation of the devices is needed now.

Managed devices. In Ohio, the majority of the devices used for online testing are managed devices. For districts that may still need to download and install the secure browser onto managed devices, you can push out the secure browser using the management software. There is no need to bring devices into school buildings prior to test administration.

Other devices. For nonmanaged devices, the secure browser has to be installed onto each device. If the browser hasn't been installed thus far on devices currently being used for remote or hybrid instruction, devices will need to be returned by students for this to occur. Some questions have been raised about how this can be coordinated. While the amount of time required to touch each device is minimal, handling multiple devices can become time consuming.

This task is not unique to assessment; other software updates or changes that districts need to implement for instruction must also be planned and managed at the local level. Districts may wish to follow the same procedures they are using for those types of updates.

Some suggestions for installing the secure browser, which should be accomplished prior to test administration, include the following:

- Schools could schedule appointment times for students to bring in their devices either individually or in socially distanced groups.

- Schools could require students to bring in their devices and leave them for district personnel to prepare for test administration. Teachers could make instructional assignments that do not require devices until either installation or test administration takes place.
- If the district has a reserve of devices not currently distributed to students, it could update that batch and then arrange to swap those with devices currently with students. This process would be repeated in a series of batches until all devices have been updated.
- A school or district could have a “roving” technology staff member who travels to students’ homes or a neutral nonschool location to make needed updates to devices.

The simplest method of installation requires downloading the secure browser or app directly to the device and installing it. Additional installation options vary depending on the device platform (e.g., Chrome OS, Windows). See the platform specific documentation on the [Technology Coordinator](#) page for details.

Test administration. The Department posted [Practical Advice on Fall Third Grade English Language Arts \(ELA\) Test and End-of-Course Exams](#) providing examples and considerations for test administration for schools and districts utilizing hybrid or remote models of instruction.

Support. District technology coordinators and district test coordinators must be commended for all the work they do each year—and each test administration—to ensure that Ohio students are tested. The Department and our testing vendor Cambium want to do everything possible to support you as we all work through the particular challenges this fall.

- Contact the Ohio Help Desk at OHHelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com or 877-231-7809.
- Contact the Office of Assessment at statetests@education.ohio.gov.
- The Quick Guide for Setting Up Your Online Testing Technology is located at [https://oh.portal.cambiumast.com/core/fileparse.php/3094/urlt/Quick Guide for Setting Up Your Online Testing Technology 2020-2021.pdf](https://oh.portal.cambiumast.com/core/fileparse.php/3094/urlt/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Setting%20Up%20Your%20Online%20Testing%20Technology%202020-2021.pdf).
- Further technical information for technology coordinators can be found at <https://oh.portal.cambiumast.com/users/technology-coordinators.stml>.