



Vermont Science Assessment:

Test Administration Manual (TAM)

Updated January 13, 2021

Prepared by Cambium Assessment, Inc.

Table of Contents

- Vermont Resources and Help Desk Information 4
- Section I. General VTSA Information..... 5**
- Assessment Participation 5
- Technology and Online Systems 5
- Testing Schedule 5
- Content and Item Types 6
- Vermont Science Assessment Training Test 6
- Pause Rules..... 6
- Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations 6
- Vermont Science Assessment Security 7
- Ensuring Test Security..... 7
- Security of the Test Environment..... 7
- Section II. Before Testing 10**
- Test Administrator Tasks Prior to Testing 10
- Establishing Appropriate Testing Conditions..... 10
- Additional Information about Reviewing Student Information 11
- Additional Information about Student Login Information 11
- Section III. During VTSA Administration..... 13**
- Directions for Administration 13
- Logging In to the Test Administrator Interface..... 13
- Starting a Test Session..... 14
- Providing Students with a Test Session ID Number and Login Information..... 14
- Viewing and Approving Students..... 16
- Monitoring Student Progress..... 18
- Address Problems That May Come Up During the Test Session..... 20
- Participation Reports..... 20
- Appeals Process 21
- Section IV. After Testing 22**
- Destruction of Printed Test Materials and Scratch Paper 22
- Enter Data for Paper Tests and Return Materials..... 22
- Score Reporting..... 22
- Non-Participation Codes 22

Appendix A. Examples of Test Security Violations	25
Appendix B. Instructions for Paper Tests	27
Verify Student Settings in TIDE	27
Enter Student Responses into the Data Entry Interface (DEI).....	27
Return Materials	28

Vermont Resources and Help Desk Information

Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Help Desk

1.844.218.1184

VTHelpDesk@cambiumassessment.com

The Help Desk is open Monday–Friday 7:00 a.m. to
7:00 p.m. (except holidays).

The Help Desk may be contacted for situations and questions including the following:

- Help is needed in preparing for online testing, such as downloading the Secure Browser and installing voice packs.
- The online testing environment is down or unavailable.
- User accounts are unavailable, or users are unable to administer tests.
- Student information or test session is incorrect or missing.
- Issues are present with loading student data or student settings into the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE).

When contacting the Help Desk, provide the representative with as much detail as possible about the issue(s) encountered and the system on which it occurred. This should include the following:

- Type of device being used for the test
- Any error messages that appeared (code and description)
- Operating system and browser information
- Network configuration information
- Your contact information, including email address and telephone number
- Any relevant and authorized student and school information, including the Statewide Student Identifier (SSID), grade level, and content area.

For online Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA) administration resources, please refer to the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP) Portal at <https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com>.

Section I. General VTSA Information

In spring 2021, Vermont will administer the VTSA in grades 5, 8, and 11. This science assessment will assess student’s knowledge and skills on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These assessments are computer-based tests and will be administered using the Cambium Assessment (CAI) Test Delivery System (TDS).

Assessment Participation

All students in grades 5, 8, and 11 are required to participate in the VTSA.

Online braille and large print versions of the VTSA will be available. Students requiring a braille version of the VTSA should be assigned this embedded accommodation in TIDE before the test administration. Students requiring a large print version of some items of the VTSA should be assigned the required print size through the respective embedded designated support in TIDE.

Paper braille, paper large print, and paper standard versions of the VTSA will be available. Orders for paper test materials will be placed in TIDE.

Technology and Online Systems

Online testing systems used for the VTSA administration are the same as those used for the spring 2021 administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessments. The list of applicable online systems include the Secure Browser, Test Administrator (TA) Interface, and TIDE.

The Secure Browser must be installed on all computers used for testing. The Secure Browser can be downloaded from the VTCAP Portal at <https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/secure-browsers.stml>.

The VTSA will provide online access to a Desmos calculator at each grade in the online test environment. Grade 8 and 11 students will also have access to the periodic table.

Students requiring special test settings—such as color contrast, text-to-speech, print size, or braille—should be assigned those test settings through TIDE prior to testing.

Testing Schedule

The testing window for the VTSA is **March 16 to May 28, 2021**, and the make-up window for the VTSA is May 31 to June 11, 2021.

The VTSA is comprised of two separate sessions. Students should be provided a minimum of 60 minutes for each session. This testing time is an estimate of how much time students will need to complete the assessment. This time does not include time to start computers, log in

VTSA TAM

students, read test directions, or breaks. Test Administrators should plan 10 additional minutes for reading test directions to students. Test Administrators should work with School Test Coordinators to determine testing schedules. Schools may choose to administer the sessions on two separate days or on the same day.

Within the two sessions of the test the three disciplines of science are presented in blocks which are randomly delivered to students. This enables students to be testing at the same time without seeing the same test items on a neighboring student's computer screen. The test delivery system will require students to submit their answers after session 1, to clearly indicate they are completed with the first session. They will also submit answers after session 2.

When testing is resumed to begin session 2, the TA will need to start a new test session and provide a new session ID to students. When instructing the students to log in, the TA should read the script (SAY boxes) to the students from this Test Administration Manual (TAM).

Content and Item Types

The VTSA consists of a variety of item types. Some items are organized in item clusters designed to engage the student in a grade-appropriate, meaningful scientific activity aligned to a specific NGSS performance expectation. Each item cluster begins with a real-world phenomenon and includes two or more items that require students to demonstrate science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and cross-cutting concepts described by the performance expectation. On average, each student will receive a total of 8 item clusters and 16 stand-alone items. Although the VTSA is not computer-adaptive, different students will receive different item clusters and stand-alone items. Item type tutorials are available on the VTCAP Portal at <http://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/item-type-tutorials/>.

Vermont Science Assessment Training Test

In preparation for the VTSA, it is **highly recommended** that **all** participating students access the VTSA Training Test. The training test environment can be accessed through the VTSA card on the VTCAP Portal at <http://vt.portal.cambiumast.com>. Teachers are encouraged to start a training test TA session and administer the training test with a proctored session. A proctored session allows teachers to confirm that students' test settings are correct in TIDE.

Pause Rules

There will be a 20-minute pause rule set for the VTSA. If a student pauses the test for more than 20 minutes, he or she will not be able to return to the questions that he or she previously answered. If a student pauses on a page that contains multiple questions, he or she will be able to return to the same page and respond to the remaining questions even after the 20-minute pause.

Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

All designated supports and accommodations must be entered into the "Science" subject area of

VTSA TAM

TIDE before testing. Students using text-to-speech designated support will need headphones or earbuds to complete the VTSA.

Vermont Science Assessment Security

Ensuring Test Security

All VTSA items and test materials are secure and must be appropriately handled. Secure handling protects the integrity, validity, and confidentiality of assessment items, prompts, and student information. Refer to [Appendix A](#) for examples of issues that are considered violations of test security.

Violation of test security is a serious matter with far-reaching consequences. Breaches of test security include but are not limited to copying test materials, failing to return test materials, coaching students, giving students answers, and/or changing students' answers. Such acts may lead to the invalidation of an entire school district's student test scores, disruption of the test system statewide, and legal action against the individual(s) committing the breach, including revocation of the individual's license to teach in Vermont. A breach of test security may be dealt with as a violation of the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers, as well as violation of other pertinent state and federal law and regulation. The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) will investigate all such matters and pursue appropriate follow-up action.

Security of the Test Environment

[Table 1](#) describes security requirements for the test environment during various stages of testing. The test environment refers to all aspects of the testing situation while students are testing and includes what a student can see, hear, or access (including access via technology).

Individuals who have witnessed, been informed of, or suspect the possibility of a test security incident that could potentially affect the integrity of the assessments must report this incident immediately to the District Coordinator.

Table 1. Requirements of the Test Environment

Before Testing	
Instructional materials removed or covered	Instructional materials must be removed or covered, including but not limited to information that might assist students in answering questions. This includes materials that may be displayed on bulletin boards, chalkboards, dry-erase boards, or charts (e.g., wall charts that contain literary definitions, maps, mathematics formulas, etc.).
Student seating	Students must be seated so that there is enough space between them to minimize opportunities to look at one another's work, or they should be provided with table-top partitions.

VTSA TAM

Signage	If helpful, place a “TESTING—DO NOT DISTURB” sign on the door or post signs in halls and entrances rerouting hallway traffic to promote optimum testing conditions.
During Testing	
Quiet environment	Provide a quiet environment void of talking or other distractions that might interfere with a student’s ability to concentrate or might compromise the testing situation.
No answer key development	No form or type of answer key may be developed for test items.
Access to assessments	Only students who are testing can view test items. Students who are not being tested, unauthorized staff, or other adults must not be in the room where a test is being administered. Trained teachers and Test Administrators may have limited exposure to test items in the course of properly administering the assessments; however, Test Administrators may not actively review or analyze any test items.
Testing through the Secure Browser	Administration of the VTSA is possible only through the Student Interface via the Secure Browser.
No unauthorized log in to the Online Testing System	Only students may log in to the Student Interface. Students may not use another student’s login credentials. Only adults may log in to the Test Administrator Interface (TA Interface) with an authorized account. An adult may not use another person’s username and password.
No access to digital, electronic, or manual devices	No digital, electronic, or manual device may be used to record or retain test items, reading passages, or writing prompts. Similarly, these materials must not be discussed with or released to anyone via any media, including fax, email, and social media websites.

After Testing	
No access to responses	Test Administrators are not permitted to review student responses in the testing interface or students’ notes on scratch paper.
No copies of test materials	Unless needed as a print-on-demand or braille accommodation, no copies of the test items or stimuli may be made or otherwise retained.
No retaining, discussing, or releasing test materials	Descriptions of test items, stimuli, and simulations must not be retained, discussed, or released to anyone.

VTSA TAM

No test materials used for instructional purpose	Test items, stimuli, and simulations must not be used for instructional purposes.
Destroy test materials securely	Printed materials from the print-on-demand accommodation and scratch paper should be destroyed after testing.

Section II. Before Testing

Test Administrator Tasks Prior to Testing

Prior to administering a test, each Test Administrator is expected to:

- Read this manual;
- Attend any district/school test administration training;
- Receive and activate a TIDE account;
- Complete the TA Certification course at <https://ta-cert.cambiumast.com/courses/vermont>;
- Check to ensure the secure browser is available on each student testing device;
- Provide students opportunities to practice and prepare, including the Training Test and Item Type Tutorials;
- Review student information with the School Testing Coordinator to ensure each applicable student receives the proper test with the appropriate supports;
- Receive necessary materials for students, including scratch paper, testing tickets, and any applicable accommodations materials from the School Test Coordinator;
- Immediately before testing, provide students with necessary login information including first name, SSID, and the test session ID to log into a test;
- Immediately before testing, provide students with scratch paper and any other necessary materials, including handheld calculators, if providing;
- Prior, during, and after testing, adhere to test security policy and school procedures, including establishing appropriate testing conditions; and
- Prior, during, and after testing, report all potential test security incidents to the School Test Coordinator in a manner consistent with state and district policies.

Establishing Appropriate Testing Conditions

The test administration should be conducted in a secure environment as described in [Table 1](#) above. School Test Coordinators and Test Administrators will need to work together to determine the most appropriate testing option(s) and testing environment based on the number of computers available, the number of students in each tested grade, and the estimated time needed to complete each test.

Each school should establish procedures to maintain a quiet testing environment throughout the test session, recognizing that some students will finish more quickly than others.

VTSA TAM

- After students finish testing for the session, they may sit or read quietly until the test session is completed. If all students are completed testing, the TA may stop the testing session.
- At the end of the session time, individual students who need more time may be transitioned to continue working in a secure environment. School Test Coordinators will provide guidance to TAs about transitioning students for additional time.

Additional Information about Reviewing Student Information

Each Test Administrator should verify student demographic information and test settings prior to testing.

- Each student must be correctly assigned to his or her district, school, and grade in TIDE. District Administrators add this information to TIDE.
- In addition to the correct school and grade, School Test Coordinators and Test Administrators should verify that all students have accurate test settings in TIDE, including universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations (embedded and non-embedded) prior to testing. The test settings are uploaded in TIDE (refer to the [TIDE User Guide](#)). District Administrators and School Test Coordinators can add, delete, or change embedded and non-embedded accommodations in TIDE for students who require them. Test Administrators may view student information; however, Test Administrators cannot add, upload, or modify test settings in TIDE. Within the TA Interface, a Test Administrator can turn off accessibility features not in TIDE prior to the start of the test.



IMPORTANT: Any additions, modifications, or deletions of students and changes to student test settings must be completed **before the student can test**. The update, once made, may take **up to 24 hours to appear in the TA interface**. Failure to correct test settings before testing could result in the student's not being provided with the needed accommodations and/or designated supports at the time of testing. This is considered a testing irregularity and may result in the need for a test reset appeal.

Additional Information about Student Login Information

The following information must be provided to each student before they can log into TIDE:

- Student first name as it appears in TIDE
- SSID
- The test session ID to log into a test

The student first name and SSID information can be printed on a testing ticket and distributed to each student prior to testing to ensure they enter it exactly as it appears in TIDE. Test

VTSA TAM

Administrators or Test Coordinators can print testing tickets by using the **Print Testing Tickets** feature in the **Administering Tests** section of TIDE. For information on printing student testing tickets with student login information, consult the [TIDE User Guide](#).

When a Test Administrator creates a test session, a unique session ID is randomly generated. This session ID must be provided to students before they log in. Please refer to [Starting a Test Session](#) (below) for details about creating the session ID.



Note: When a Test Administrator creates a test session, a unique session ID is randomly generated. This session ID must be provided to students before they log in. Please see below or refer to the [Test Administrator \(TA\) User Guide](#) located on the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal for detailed information on how to generate session IDs.

Section III. During VTSA Administration

Directions for Administration

- On the day of testing, the Test Administrator must create a test session before students can log in to the TDS, but no more than 30 minutes prior to test administration (or the system will time out due to a lack of activity). When a Test Administrator creates a test session, a unique session ID is randomly generated. This session ID must be provided to the students before they log in and should be written down.
- On the day of testing, the Test Administrator will start a grade 5, grade 8, or grade 11 session and read the directions aloud to students. To ensure that all students are tested under the same conditions, the Test Administrator should adhere strictly to the script for administering the test. On the following pages, the test directions to read aloud are shown in boxes with blue backgrounds and indicated by the word “SAY”.
- Test Administrators are responsible for monitoring student progress and tracking the time for the VTSA. The test session *will not* automatically end after 60 minutes. Sixty minutes is the minimum time that must be provided for each session. Students may be given additional time if needed, as long as students are working productively.
- When asked, the Test Administrator should answer questions raised by students but should never help the class or individual students with specific test items.

The following sections provide the Test Administrator with the steps to administer a test:

1. Log in to the TA Interface
2. Start the test session
3. Provide students with test session ID and login information
4. View and approve students
5. Monitor student progress
6. Stop the test session and log out of the TA Interface



The Test Administrator should verify the security of the testing environment prior to beginning a test session. Test Administrators must ensure that students do not have access to digital, electronic, or manual devices during testing, unless otherwise needed to support approved accessibility features.

Logging In to the Test Administrator Interface

Access the Test Administrator Interface (TA Interface) via <https://vt.tds.cambiumast.com/testadmin> or from the [VTCAP Portal](#). Then, enter your email address and password and click [Secure Login] to log in to the TA Interface.

VTSA TAM



Note: If you have not logged in using this browser before, or if you have cleared your browser cache, an **Enter Code** page appears and an email is sent to your address. This applies every time you access TIDE with a new browser. The email contains an authentication code, which you must use within fifteen minutes of the email being sent.




Starting a Test Session

From the test selection page, select the particular test and grade to be administered in the test session and click the **[Start Operational Session]** button.

Operational Test Selection 🔍 ✕

Choose a testing category
Then select one or more tests. You can switch categories by using the button in the modal header.

- VTSA
- Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments
- Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

① Tests Selected 🗑️ Clear All

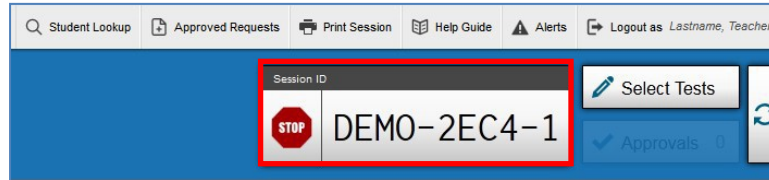
VTSA

✕ Grade 5 Science

▶ Start Operational Session

Providing Students with a Test Session ID Number and Login Information

After starting the test session, the Test Administrator will be provided with a Session ID. Write the Session ID on the board for students.



In addition, students will need individual login information, including their first name exactly as it appears in TIDE and their SSID number. As discussed in the [Providing Students with a Test Session ID Number and Login Information](#) section, testing tickets can be printed to provide students the exact information they need to log in. Test Administrators or Test Coordinators can print testing tickets by using the **Print Testing Tickets** feature in the **Administering Tests** section of TIDE. Students will enter this information into the Student Interface of the Secure Browser, shown below.



When providing students with the test session ID number, read aloud the directions below.

SAY: Enter your first name followed by your student ID number using the information on the paper I gave you. Then enter the test session ID number exactly as it is written without extra spaces or characters. Raise your hand if you need help typing this information.

Please do not share your student ID number with anyone. This is private information.

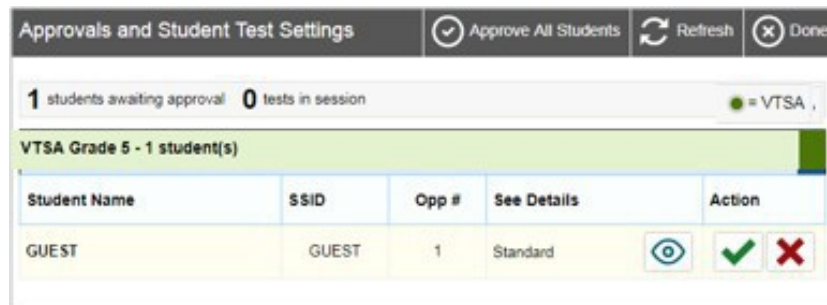
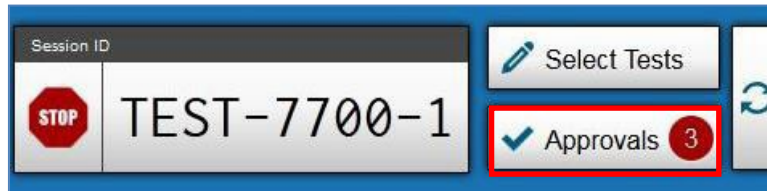
SAY: Now click [Sign In]. Once you have successfully signed in, you will see a screen with your first name, grade, student ID number, and school. If all of the information on your screen is correct, select [YES] to continue. If any of the information is incorrect, please raise your hand and show me what is incorrect.

Pause to assist students.

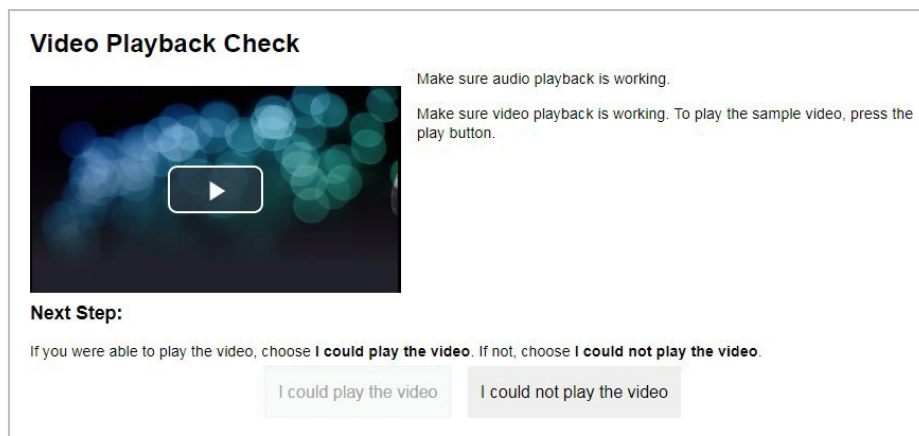
SAY: Now select VTSA [Insert Grade] [Insert Session].

Viewing and Approving Students

After logging in, students will be waiting for TA approval into the test session. In the TA Interface, select the [Approvals] button and approve student requests to start a test by clicking the checkmark icon, ✓.



The students will also see a video playback check, as some of the VTSA items include short video simulations. There are no audio items on the VTSA (unless a student requires text-to-speech designated support).




SAY: You should see a screen that prompts you to verify that the video on your computer is working. Press play to see the video. If the video works, select [I could play the video] and then select [Continue]. If you are unable to play the video, please raise your hand.

Students marked as requiring **text-to-speech** in TIDE will be asked to verify that their headsets are working properly.

Text-to-Speech Sound Check

Make sure text-to-speech is working.

 Press the speaker button. You should hear a voice speak the following sentence: "This text is being read aloud."

Sound Settings

Current Voice Pack: Microsoft Anna - English (United S ▾)

Use the sliders to adjust the available text-to-speech settings.

Volume
 10

Pitch
 10

Rate
 10

Next Step:

If you heard the voice clearly, choose **I heard the voice**. If not, choose **I did not hear the voice**. To continue testing without checking text-to-speech, choose **Skip TTS Check**.

For **ONLY** students requiring text-to-speech, read the following box.

SAY: Next, you should see a screen that prompts you to verify that the sound on your computer is working. Put your headsets on and click the icon of the speaker to hear the sound. If you hear the voice, click [I heard the voice]. If not, raise your hand. You can adjust the volume, pitch, and rate of the voice by using the sliders.

Pause to help students.

The students will see a Test Instructions and Help page.

SAY: Next, you will see an "Instructions and Help" page. You may review the Help Guide and your test settings here. The Help Guide lists the test tools and buttons you may use during the test or that will appear on the test. Please read this carefully. You may select the question mark button in the top right corner during the test to access the Help Guide. If you need help please raise your hand.

Before the test begins, inform **all students** of general information relevant to the test.

SAY: The questions in this test cover many science topics. Although some of the questions may look difficult or unfamiliar, you may be able to figure out the answers if you read and think about them carefully.

If you are unsure of an answer, provide what you think is the best answer; there is no penalty for guessing. If you would like to review that answer at a later time, mark the question for review. Mark for Review is available in the upper right corner of the answer and represented by three horizontal lines. Flagging the question will remind you to go back and decide whether you want to change the answer later.

SAY: Your answers need to be your own work. Please keep your eyes on your own test and remember that there should be no talking.


When you are ready to begin your test, click [BEGIN TEST NOW] at the bottom of the page.




Start timing the test. The testing time of at least two 60-minute sessions is a recommendation of how much time students will need to complete the VTSA. Students may be given additional time if needed.

Monitoring Student Progress

It is very important that the Test Administrator monitor student progress throughout the test session. The Test Administrator may also use the TA Interface to view the testing progress of any student.

Test Administrators may assist students in navigating the online test environment and different item types, but they should not assist students with any content needed to answer questions or indicate that the student selected an incorrect or correct answer in any way.


Although the TA Interface is designed to automatically refresh every 20 seconds, the Test Administrator can refresh it manually at any time by clicking the refresh button, , at the upper right corner of the screen.

Students in your LIVE Test Session						
0 students awaiting approval		0 print requests		1 active tests		 = VTSA
Student Name	SSID	Opp #	Test	Test Status	Test Settings	Actions
GUEST	GUEST	1	VTSA Grade 5	Paused 4/7 answered	Standard	
GUEST	GUEST	1	VTSA Grade 5	Started 1/7 answered	Standard	 



Do NOT click the web browser's refresh button to refresh the TA Interface. Doing so may log the Test Administrator out of the current session. If this happens, have students pause the test and create a new test session. Students should log in to the test again with the new test session ID.

VTSA TAM

The information button, , in the TA Interface also allows Test Administrators to monitor and understand reasons that halt student progress.

If the two sessions of the test will be administered over two days, use the script below.

When there are 10 minutes left in the first test session, read the following.

SAY: You have 10 minutes left in this session. Please review any completed or marked-for-review questions now, as you will not see these items again. Please press the Submit button to submit the test session when you have completed all test questions and are finished reviewing your work. You will begin a new test session on your next day of testing.

If the two sessions of the test will be administered on the same day, with a 10-minute break between 60-minute sessions, use the script below.

When there are 10 minutes left in the first test session, read the following.

SAY: You have 10 minutes left in this session. Please review any completed or marked-for-review questions now, as you will not see these items again. Please press the [End Test] button to submit the test session when you have completed all test questions. You will see a Review Your Answers screen. After reviewing your answers, including any you previously marked for review, select [Submit Test]. You will begin a new test session when you return after the break.

The next day or after the break, read the script below.

SAY: Enter your first name followed by your student ID number using the information on the paper I gave you. Then enter the test session ID number exactly as it is written without extra spaces or characters. Raise your hand if you need help typing this information.

Please do not share your student ID number with anyone. This is private information.

SAY: Now click [Sign In]. Once you have successfully signed in, you will see a screen with your first name, grade, student ID number, and school. If all of the information on your screen is correct, select [YES] to continue. If any of the information is incorrect, please raise your hand and show me what is incorrect.

Pause to assist students.

SAY: Now select VTSA [Insert Grade] [Insert Session].

VTSA TAM

When there are 10 minutes left at the end of the next session, read the following.

SAY: There are 10 minutes left in this session. Please review your work and click [SUBMIT TEST] when you are finished. You may have more time if you need it.

When the time is up, read the following.

SAY: This test session is now over. If you are completed with the test, please click [SUBMIT TEST] now. If you are not completed with the test, please click [PAUSE]. I will now collect scratch paper and any other materials.

In the TA Interface, the Test Administrator should click [**Stop**] to end the test session and pause any student tests that are still in progress. Students who have not finished testing may return to complete any unfinished items at any time during the VTSA administration window. When finished, the Test Administrator can log out of the TA Interface by clicking the [**Logout**] button at the upper right corner of the screen.

Address Problems That May Come Up During the Test Session

[Table 2](#) shows appropriate responses to specific problems that may come up during testing.

Table 2. Test Administrator Responses during the Test Session

Problem	Response
The TA notices that a student is off task.	Encourage the student to do his or her best. In some cases, the best solution would be to have the student pause the test and allow the student to take a break.
A student requests assistance with answering a test item or manipulating an item type.	Tell the student that you are not allowed to help them and that they need to do their best on their own.
The TA Interface is accidentally closed while students are still testing.	Before 30 minutes have elapsed, the browser can be opened, and the TA can navigate back to the TA Interface. Re-enter the test session by entering the active session ID.
The TA is automatically logged out of the TA Interface after 30 minutes of inactivity by both the TA and by the students. This will result in closing the test session entirely.	The TA can create a new test session with a new session ID. The students will need to use this to log back into the system and resume testing.

Participation Reports

Test Administrators, School Test Coordinators, and District Administrators can see how many students completed the VTSA in a given school using the **Monitoring Test Progress** function in

VTSA TAM

TIDE. To access participation reports, select [**Plan and Manage Testing**] from the **Monitoring Test Progress** menu under **Administering Tests**.

Additional information about monitoring participation can be found in the [TIDE User Guide](#) on the VTCAP Portal.

Appeals Process

In the normal flow of test opportunities, students take tests in the TDS and then submit them. Appeals are a way of interrupting this normal flow. There are several types of appeals:

- A Grace Period Extension allows students to review previously answered questions upon resuming a test if paused for longer than 20 minutes.
- Invalidating a test eliminates the test opportunity, and students have no further opportunities for the test.
- Resetting a test allows students to restart a test opportunity (removing all responses on the test) or allows the data entry operator to restart the data entry process.
- Re-opening a test allows students to return to their assessment, modify their answers, and resubmit the test.
- Restoring a test that was reset reverses a reset, restoring students' responses to what they were before the reset was processed.

Only District Coordinators, District Administrators, and School Test Coordinators may create appeals in TIDE. If a Test Administrator feels an appeal is needed, they should work with their School Test Coordinator to submit relevant appeals in TIDE. All appeals require approval from the AOE and will be reviewed as soon as possible after the appeal is received. For more information on Appeals, please see the [TIDE User Guide](#) on the VTCAP Portal.

Section IV. After Testing

Destruction of Printed Test Materials and Scratch Paper

Secure printed and paper test materials must be securely destroyed (shredded) immediately by the School Test Coordinator following test sessions and may not be retained from one test session to the next. This includes test tickets, used scratch paper, and accommodations materials (including printed test items, embossed braille printouts, etc.).

If a student is assigned the print-on-demand accommodation, print requests must be approved and processed by the Test Administrator in the TA Interface during test administration. The Test Administrator must ensure that the printer is monitored for each item, and materials for each item must be securely destroyed after the student has completed the test session. Do not keep printed test items or scratch paper for future test sessions.



Federal law—the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act—prohibits the release of any student’s personally identifiable information. Any printed materials must be securely stored and then destroyed.

Enter Data for Paper Tests and Return Materials

Upon completion of paper tests, Test Administrators are required to submit student responses to standard paper, large print, and braille paper tests in the Data Entry Interface (DEI). Instructions for using the DEI and returning materials are available in [Appendix B](#).

Score Reporting

In 2021, the VTSA is an operational test. Standards for four achievement levels were set in the summer of 2019 by a committee of Rhode Island and Vermont educators. Results for the VTSA will be reported on demand during the 2020 – 2021 test window. After a student submits session 1 and session 2, individual student results for the VTSA will be reported on demand during the 2020 – 2021 test window. However, the AOE reminds everyone that scores are embargoed until a later date and should not be sent home with students until officially released by the AOE.

Non-Participation Codes

There are circumstances in which a student did not participate in an expected test due to an exemption. In such instances, you need to assign a non-participation code to the student’s test in TIDE so that Reporting can accurately explain the non-participation.

Due to the unique nature of the 2020-2021 school year, the AOE has added two new non-participation codes to try and cover all scenarios. The non-participation codes available for spring 2021 are shown in Table 3. For information on setting non-participation codes, please see the [TIDE User Guide](#).

Table 3. Non-Participation Codes

Non-Participation Code	Description
<p>EL Exemption (NP for ELA only; not an option for math and science tests)</p>	<p>The EL code may be used to document non-participation of a student who meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is an English Learner who has been enrolled in a U.S. school or the District of Columbia for less than 12 months. <p>This exemption is only granted for one test administration.</p>
<p>Medical Exemption</p>	<p>The Medical code may be used to document non-participation of a student who meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student who is unable to test during the entire testing window due to an unanticipated medical emergency, and has a state approved medical exemption.
<p>Fragile Non-Participant</p>	<p>The Fragile code may be used to document non-participation of a student who meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is receiving fully remote instruction, AND • Student is medically fragile OR lives with a medically fragile household member, AND • Student is unable to appear for in-person testing at any time during the testing window, with all appropriate and valid attempts made to provide an assessment opportunity for the student. <p>Please note that this is not a federally recognized exemption but does provide supporting evidence for participation trends.</p>

VTSA TAM

Fully Remote Non-Participant	<p>The Fully Remote code may be used to document non-participation of a student who meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student is receiving fully remote instruction, AND• Student is unable to appear for in-person testing at any time during the testing window, with all appropriate and valid attempts made to provide an assessment opportunity for the student. <p>Please note that this is not a federally recognized exemption but does provide supporting evidence for participation trends.</p>
------------------------------	--

Appendix A. Examples of Test Security Violations

Level of Severity	Types of Issues
<p>LOW Impropriety</p>	Students making distracting gestures/sounds or talking during the test session, creating a disruption in the test session for other students.
	Students leaving the test room without authorization.
	Testing staff leaving related instructional materials on the walls in the testing room.
<p>MEDIUM Irregularity</p>	Students cheating or providing answers to one another, including passing notes, giving help to other students during testing, or using hand-held electronic devices to exchange information.
	Students accessing the Internet or any unauthorized software or applications during a testing event.
	Students accessing or using unauthorized electronic equipment (e.g., cell phones, smart watches, iPods, electronic translators) during testing.
	Test session disrupted due to an event such as a fire drill, school-wide power outage, or other acts.
	Testing staff failing to ensure administration and supervision of the NGSS Field Test by qualified, trained personnel.
	Testing staff giving incorrect instructions that are not corrected prior to testing.
	Testing staff giving out his or her username/password (via email or otherwise), including to other authorized users.
	Testing staff coaching or providing any other type of assistance to students that may affect their responses. This includes both verbal cues (e.g., interpreting, explaining, paraphrasing items or prompts) and nonverbal cues (e.g., voice inflection, pointing, nodding head) to the correct answer. This also includes leading students through any instructional strategy, such as think-aloud, asking students to point to the correct answer or otherwise identify the source of their answer, or requiring students to show their work.
	Testing staff providing students with non-allowable materials or devices during test administration or allowing inappropriate designated supports and/or accommodations during test administration.
	Testing staff allowing anyone other than a student to log in to the test unless prescribed as an allowable accommodation in the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). This includes Test Administrators or other staff using student information to log in or allowing a student to log in using another student’s information.
Testing staff providing a student access to another student’s work/responses.	
<p>HIGH</p>	Testing staff modifying student responses.

VTSA TAM

Level of Severity	Types of Issues
<p>Breach</p>	<p>The live Student Interface or TA Interface being used for practice instead of a live test administration. Live interfaces should be accessed only via the Secure Browser for live assessments (interim or summative). Any practice tests should be taken on the Practice Test site, located on the Vermont Comprehensive Program portal.</p>
	<p>Adults or students posting items or test materials on social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.).</p>
	<p>Testing staff allowing students to take home printed test items, reading passages, or scratch paper that was used during the test or failing to otherwise securely store test materials.</p>
	<p>Adults or students copying, discussing, or otherwise retaining test items, reading passages, or answers for any reason. This includes the use of photocopiers or digital, electronic, or manual devices to record or communicate a test item. This also includes using secure test items, modified secure test items, reading passages, or answer keys for instructional purposes.</p>
	<p>Secure test materials (e.g., test items, reading passages) being shared with the media or allowing the media to observe a secure test administration.</p>
	<p>Adults or students improperly removing secure testing materials—such as test items, stimuli, reading passages, or scratch paper—from the testing environment.</p>

Appendix B. Instructions for Paper Tests

These instructions are applicable **ONLY** for paper tests (standard paper, braille, or large print).

Upon completion of paper tests, Test Administrators are required to submit student responses to standard paper, large print, and braille paper tests in the DEI. The DEI is a secure system that will display an online version of the test. Test Administrators must accurately transcribe all student responses into the DEI and submit the test on behalf of the student.

The following procedures are necessary to successfully administer a paper assessment.

Verify Student Settings in TIDE

Ensure that all students requiring standard, large print, and braille materials have been correctly marked in the student settings section in TIDE. Students who are taking the print version of standard, braille, and large print need to have the proper non-embedded accommodation selected in TIDE to be eligible for the DEI test.

Enter Student Responses into the Data Entry Interface (DEI)

For all standard, large print, and braille paper tests, the Test Administrator should verify that the student's name, SSID, Test Administrator name, school, and district are written on the cover of the booklet. Students must answer all questions directly in their test booklet. For responses requiring more space than available in the test booklet, students may answer on a piece of paper with their name, SSID, and question number(s) clearly marked; this paper must be inserted into their test booklets.

Upon completion of the test, the Test Administrator will collect all test booklets and record all student responses into the DEI. The DEI displays the appropriate paper test in an online format for each student. All items that were presented to the student in the paper test booklet will be populated in the DEI. All student responses must be entered into the DEI to be captured for scoring.

1. From the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal, navigate to the **Test Administration Guidance**. Select the **Data Entry Interface** card to log in to the DEI.



2. Enter and confirm student information as it appears in TIDE.
3. Select the assessment for which student data needs to be entered.

VTSA TAM

4. Enter the student's data exactly as it appears on the student's paper test form.

The following guidelines must be followed to ensure accurate and fair transcription of student responses:

- All test materials and student responses are to be considered secure and confidential.
- Only persons who know braille should enter braille responses into the DEI.
- Transcribers should be impartial and have no vested interest in student scores.
- Transcriptions of student responses must be identical to what the student provides, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling. If a student provides an incomplete response, the transcription must match that incomplete response exactly.
- Transcriptions should be proofread by a second impartial party to confirm accuracy. For cases where students have provided a graphic in a response, two transcribers should collaborate to transfer the response.

The Test Administrator must provide written affirmation to the Test Coordinator that student responses have been completed on the student's test booklet and entered into the DEI with fidelity. Under no circumstances should a student's answer be altered or edited; to do so is a direct violation of test security.

For more detailed information concerning the DEI, consult the [Accessing the Data Entry Interface \(DEI\) Brochure](#) available on the VTCAP Portal.

Return Materials

After testing is complete and responses are entered into the DEI, assemble all paper test materials. Secure test materials should be shipped back promptly; there is no need to wait for the end of the test window to ship materials.

- Verify that all test booklets have been collected from the Test Administrators after test administration.
- Verify materials against the Packing List provided in the shipment to ensure that all **secure** test booklets are included for return. **Non-secure** test materials should not be returned.
- Place all test booklets in the return box that was included in the initial shipment.
- All materials are returned via FedEx. FedEx return kits and instructions were provided in the original shipment of test materials. Please contact the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Help Desk with questions about returning test materials.

The District Administrator, District Coordinator, and School Test Coordinator maintain final responsibility for ensuring that all secure materials are packaged and ready for return.