



TO: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Schools
Public School Administrators
Nonpublic School Administrators
Charter School Administrators

From: Amy Cox, Director, Career Readiness and Workforce Partnerships

Date: June 4, 2020

Re: Flexibility for the administration of technical skills exams conferring industry-recognized credentials to secondary career and technical education students

Background

On May 1, 2020 Governor Cuomo signed an executive order closing school building through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. As a result of this decision, many secondary career and technical education (CTE) students are unable to sit for exams to earn industry-recognized credentials required for some entry-level occupational opportunities. These industry-recognized assessments validate student attainment of specific technical skills for potential employers.

Flexibilities Available for CTE Programs Culminating in Industry Certification

NYSED encourages schools and BOCES to offer students the opportunity to complete the written and performance components of technical skills exams through alternatives arranged with the test vendor or once schools/testing sites are able to safely open and administer them. This encouragement is not directed toward enabling students to take assessments which are not necessary to enter the industry, such as a NOCTI examination, but rather assessments that carry an industry advantage or lead to a credential. Students who left school due to the COVID shutdown and were denied the opportunity to complete such assessments may find themselves at a disadvantage when and if they wish to seek employment in a particular industry. While there is no funding available for students who have already graduated, programs can offset the cost of such examinations with the savings from the previously planned and subsequently cancelled June 2020 administration of the tests.

This process may start by first identifying the secondary CTE students who have completed a CTE program, met the requirements for high school graduation by June or August 2020, and require an industry-recognized credential to enter a given career field. Some exam vendors are offering flexibilities such as extending expiration dates of testing vouchers, allowing remote proctoring, or offering at-home assessments. Students meeting the local requirements to take the exam should be allowed take it if districts or BOCES can secure a

remote alternative with the test vendor. When remote administration is not possible, districts and BOCES must wait until they can safely reopen their buildings to allow students the opportunity to take exams, including the scored demonstration of the skills component. Providing these options is allowed even after students have been awarded a diploma under the flexibilities instituted in the New York State graduation requirements for the 2019-20 school year.