

HOLLAND PATENT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents,

Every spring, Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests are administered to students across NY State. This year the ELA assessments will be administered April 11-12 and the math assessments will be administered May 1-2. Grades 4 and 8 science performance assessments will be administered May 23-24 with the written assessments to be administered June 4.

These tests are designed to measure how well students are mastering the learning standards that guide daily classroom instruction and help to ensure that students are on track to graduate from high school with the critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning skills needed for success in college and the modern workplace. The tests also show how schools and districts are progressing with the learning standards. We use the results to help us evaluate our instructional design which guides our curriculum and helps us to meet our instructional goals. In addition, we use the results along with other data to determine if students need additional supports or academic interventions. We want to be able to provide those supports so every student can feel successful as they transition through the grades. Lastly, another benefit of the data from the NYS assessments is that it helps us to compare our results with other schools across our region and state. We can then develop plans to help us improve our professional development plans for next year and continue to utilize our best practices to ensure academic success for all students.

Although these tests are mandated, I'd like to share how they can be used as teaching tools. Students can self-reflect on whether or not they're making progress and achieving the individual goals they set at the beginning of the year. Test taking is an important life skill. Building test-taking skills means greater academic confidence so as they grow older tests are easier to manage. Well-developed test-taking skills help students progress through school, and then of course the workplace.

There has been much controversy about the NYS tests since the adoption of the Common Core and new teacher evaluation laws. Commissioner Elia has heard the concerns and has made the changes for which parents have advocated for. The following changes have been implemented:

- * The testing period is now two days rather than three
- * The tests are NOT timed, students can work until they are finished
- * The tests have fewer questions
- * The tests have been developed and reviewed by NYS teachers
- * Teacher evaluation is not tied to the results of these tests

Prior test questions and further information about these tests can be attained by calling your child's principal or teacher or by visiting the NYS Department of Education website at www.nysed.gov.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Jason P. Evangelist
Superintendent of Schools