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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 2-4 and the math assessments will be administered May 1-3. Grades 4 and 8 science performance assessments will be administered May 22-23 with the written assessments to be administered June 3.

The New York State Assessments measure how our schools and District is progressing with the learning standards and ensuring our students are on track to graduate from high school with possessing the necessary skills to be successful in college and the workplace. We use the results from the assessments to help us evaluate our instructional design which guides our curriculum and also determine what additional supports or academic interventions are needed so every student can feel successful at all levels. This data will also factor in developing 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 and a 95% participation rate is required from each District, 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.

Over the last several years, concerns have been expressed regarding the assessments. Below, you find several adjustments that were made to address these concerns:

- The testing period is now two days rather than three
- The assessments are NOT timed, students can work until they are finished
- The assessments have fewer questions
- The assessments have been developed and reviewed by NYS teachers
- Student performance on the 2019 Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Tests will have no employment-related consequences for teacher and principal evaluations.

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.engageny.org/3-8.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Jason P. Evangelist
Superintendent of Schools



The 2019 Grades 3-8 New York State Assessments: What Parents Need to Know

Every spring, the Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests are administered to students across New York State. These annual ELA and math tests for students in grades 3-8 are required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The tests are designed to measure how well students are mastering the learning standards that guide 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 and can support professional development for teachers. Below you will find information about the 2019 tests.

Fewer Test Sessions

- Like the 2018 tests, the 2019 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests are two sessions each.
- With fewer test sessions, each test will have substantially fewer questions than in recent years, lessening test fatigue for students and better enabling them to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

Untimed Tests

- Like the 2016 – 2018 tests, the 2019 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests will be untimed.
- In general, this means that as long as students are working productively, they will have as much time as they need to complete each test session, within the confines of the regular school day.
- Schools and districts have discretion to allow students to read silently or quietly exit the room when they have completed their test while others continue to work.

Test Questions Reviewed and Written by New York State Teachers

- Teachers from across the State serve on committees to write, evaluate and select questions for the tests.
- Hundreds of New York State educators were involved in creating and reviewing questions for 2019 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests and selecting the questions for the test forms.
- This year, most of the test questions were written by New York State teachers specifically for the annual New York State tests.

Providing Results for Teachers and Improved Resources for Parents

- Like the previous three years, the New York State Education Department plans to have instructional reports returned to teachers by the end of the school year and to release at least 75% of the test questions again.
- The 2019 Score Reports for parents will feature more information about what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

Computer-Based Testing

- Some schools chose to administer the 2019 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests on computers rather than by paper and pencil. The computer-based tests (CBT) will have the same questions as the paper versions. Students in those schools utilizing the CBT option have access to CBT practice tests and most have had prior experience participating in other computer-based tests in ELA and Math.
- The long-term plan is for all schools to use CBT for annual State tests. CBT has the potential to further reduce the need for stand-alone field tests and make assessments better instructional tools for students with disabilities.