

March 2018

Dear Parents,

In response to concerns shared by parents and educators over the past three years, the leadership at NYSED has made some positive changes to state assessments. These changes include more involvement of educators in the test development process, fewer test questions and testing days, un-timed testing for all students and a moratorium on using grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics assessments in teacher and principal evaluations.

The grade 3-8 assessments are just one piece of the information we compile on every student to help guide and inform our instruction. These assessments allow students to show how they have progressed academically while providing a benchmark of how they perform in relation to other students in the district, regionally and across the state. The grade 3-8 ELA and mathematics assessments also provide teachers with valuable information regarding academic intervention services students require. These assessments are also used by the district to evaluate our overall educational programs and make necessary and informed educational decisions.

These changes to the grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics assessments will positively impact the overall educational experiences and success of our students both now and in the future. While the system may not be perfect, the leadership at NYSED is taking positive steps to address the concerns of parents and teachers so students throughout New York State can be fairly assessed about the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

If you have any questions about the upcoming assessments, I would encourage you to contact your child's principal. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (518) 869-3576.

Sincerely,



Tim Backus  
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction