



New York State Board of Regents  
MaryEllen Elia  
Commissioner of Education  
The State Education Department  
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Office of Communications



## **NEWS**

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### **NYSED: NO CHANGES TO GRADES 3-8 ELA & MATH TESTS IN 2017 or 2018**

After thorough review and careful consideration by State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia, Chancellor Betty A. Rosa, Vice Chancellor T. Andrew Brown and members of the Board of Regents, the Department will keep the grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics tests at three sessions for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, Commissioner Elia announced today.

“I have always said that state assessments must be diagnostic, valid, and reliable – and they must provide timely and practical information to teachers, administrators and parents,” said Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa. “Maintaining the current testing for now will allow us to measure student development over time in these areas. While we will consider moving to two-day tests for 2019, we will also examine the possibility of adding multiple measures of student achievement into the assessments.”

“After listening to the concerns and feedback from countless educators and parents, last year we made significant changes to the ELA and math tests to reduce the pressure for children and provide educators with more information about the tests than ever before,” Commissioner Elia said. “While we closely examined shortening the testing days based on this feedback, our expert analysis determined it would not be feasible to do that and still be able to have meaningful growth comparisons for students, schools or statewide. We will reexamine shortening the testing days as part of designing the tests for the state’s new learning standards.”

NYSED, in close collaboration with its assessment contractor Questar, and its assessment Technical Advisory Committee, engaged in a thorough review into the feasibility of modifying the tests to a two-session design.

This review found that making such a substantial change to the test design of modifying the length of the test to two sessions from three sessions would have rendered it inappropriate to make longitudinal student growth comparisons of the test results at the

school, district or statewide level. Therefore, the 2017 tests could not be used to make comparisons to test results from prior years in order to gauge how our students are progressing. Maintaining the current three-session testing cycle will provide important three-year trend data on student performance at the school, district and state levels as well as help determine the growth of individual students.

NYSED will implement new Grades 3-8 tests in 2019 aligned to the content standards resulting from the standards revisions process that is currently underway and will revisit shortening the tests at that time. These new tests will be developed with substantive input from educators across the state and the design will be optimally suited to measure these new New York State learning standards.

Based on consistent recommendations from educators throughout the state, substantive changes were made to the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests for this last year including:

- reduced the lengths of the tests so they contained fewer test questions;
- allowed students as much time as needed to complete the tests to provide students further opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do by allowing them to work at their own pace;
- released more test questions than ever before (75%) and earlier than ever before; and
- transformed the parent score reports to be more user-friendly and useful to parents.

#### **11/15/16 UPDATE:**

The State Education Department, in close collaboration with its assessment contractor, Questar, the assessment Technical Advisory Committee and Board leadership, engaged in a thorough review of the feasibility of modifying the grades 3-8 state assessments to a two-session design for 2017. We determined that making such a substantial change to the test design would make longitudinal comparisons of test results inappropriate at the school, district and statewide levels.

For these reasons, the spring 2017 assessments will not have any significant changes but will retain the significant changes made to the 2016 assessments. However, given the recent events of the past month and our discussions at the Regents meeting yesterday, we are making no decisions right now about the 2018 assessments. At this time there is uncertainty, and opportunities may emerge with a new administration in Washington. In fact, there are indications that the new administration may provide further flexibility to the states. We want to maintain the ability to gather all of the facts before making any determinations for 2018.

The 2017 assessments will reflect the significant changes incorporated in the 2016 assessments. We will revisit the structure of the 2018 assessments at a later time.

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