



## *Pearl River School District*

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**Marco F. Pochintesta**  
Superintendent of Schools

March 28, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians:

With the annual NYS testing period set to begin on April 11th, I want to share with parents the information that we have from the New York State Education Department regarding the positive changes and improvements that have been put into place for the 2018 Grades 3-8 NYS ELA and Math Assessments.

Results from the state assessments add to our understanding of how our students are progressing in their learning. State testing results become an important component of the “multiple measures” that inform our understanding. In addition to state test results, we consider classroom performance, local and standardized test results, teacher assessment and observations. Altogether, each of these sources allow us to make informed decisions about adjusting our instructional practices and/or resources.

Please review the attached document from the New York State Education Department regarding this year’s testing. I appreciate the thoughtful consideration you give to all aspects of your children’s education and your support of the schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Marco F. Pochintesta'.



## The 2018 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 2018 tests.

### Fewer Test Sessions

- The 2018 Grades 3–8 ELA and Math Tests have been reduced from three test sessions per subject to only two sessions per subject this year, meaning each subject will have two days of testing instead of three.
- 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 and 2017 tests, the 2018 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

- Hundreds of New York State educators were involved in creating and reviewing questions for 2018 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests and selecting the questions for the test forms.
- This year, the assessments will feature many test questions written by New York State teachers specifically for the annual New York State tests. The future goal is for all test questions to be written by NYS educators.
- Teachers from across the State serve on committees to write, evaluate and select questions for the tests.
- In all, hundreds of New York State educators were involved in creating and reviewing questions for the 2018 assessments and selecting the questions for the test forms.

### Providing Results for Teachers and Improved Resources for Parents

- Like last year, 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.
- As in 2017, the 2018 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 2018 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 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.