

**Vestal Central School District
Office of the Director of Instruction
Dr. Laura Lamash**

**Grades 3-8 New York State Tests in ELA and Mathematics
April 2015**

Frequently Asked Questions About 3-8 Testing

Our district recognizes that the Grades 3-8 New York State Assessments are just one piece of information about your child. We know that there is much more to a child's education than assessments! These assessments are one source of information that helps us create an instructional program that best prepares your child for their future choices. They provide a common measure of achievement that is the same throughout New York State. This allows our district to compare our performance to the region and state to ensure our curriculum promotes student success.

In New York State students have participated in standards-based assessments for more than two decades. These assessments help our district make decisions about curriculum and instruction. Right now this information is especially important because of the new high school Regents graduation requirements.

The Grades 3-8 New York State Assessments are designed to help understand how students will perform on the new Common Core aligned Regents in Algebra and English. The passing of these Regents is required for graduation from high school. By the year 2022, all high school students will be required to pass the ELA Regents with a score of 75 and the Algebra Regents with a score of 80. The state has established these new Regents goals to make sure students graduate from high school with strong math and literacy skills that will prepare them for success in college or a career. The Vestal district believes this is an important goal.

Provided here is information to help you better understand the administration of the New York State Tests:

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1. When are the 2015 Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Assessments?

Each test consists of three parts and is given over three days. The ELA assessments will be administered on April 14, 15, and 16. Make up dates will be from April 17 to April 21. The math assessments will be administered the week after the ELA assessments on April 22, 23, and 24.

2. When will I know the results of the assessments?

Typically, the assessment score reports are received by the district in late August and mailed to you from your child's school the beginning of September. An example of these score reports is available at this web site:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/eiscorerereports14.html>

3. What do the results mean?

As standards-based assessments, the results show how well your child is meeting the performance goals necessary for the successful completion of high school. These goals are aligned to the New York State standards for education. In 2010, the Common Core Learning Standards were adopted to replace the state standards first established in 1994.

For grades 3-8 ELA and math, students at Levels 2 and above are on track for current graduation requirements. Students at Levels 3 and above are on track to graduate at the state's new level referred to as "aspirational" that will be put into place in the year 2022. The aspirational level of achievement means students will be able to pass the high school English Regents with a score of 75 and the high school Algebra Regents with a score of 80. The aspirational level indicates students have the necessary math and literacy skills to succeed in college or for successful entry into the work force.

Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Explanation of Performance Levels	
Level 4: Student excels in the Common Core Learning Standards for this grade level. Student will exceed current and aspirational (2022) levels of performance for the Regents Diploma.	
Level 3: Student is proficient in the Common Core Learning Standards for this grade level. <i>Aspirational Levels (2022): Student is on track to achieve at the aspirational college- and career-ready level, first required for Regents Diploma purposes with the Class of 2022.</i>	
Level 2: Student is partially proficient in the Common Core Learning Standards for this grade level. Student is on track to meet current New York high school graduation requirements. <i>Aspirational Levels (2022): Student is not on track to meet the 2022 aspirational levels for Regents Diploma purposes.</i>	
Level 1: Student is well below proficient in the learning standards for this grade level. Student is not on track to meet current New York high school graduation requirements. <i>Aspirational Levels (2022): Student is not on track to meet the 2022 aspirational levels for Regents Diploma purposes.</i>	

Additional explanations of the performance levels and scale score ranges for the 2014 assessments can be found here:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/ela-math/2014/2014-ELADefinitionsofPerformanceLevels.pdf>

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New York State Department of Education has published a summary report on the 2014 3-8 assessments that you can find here: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/ela-math/2014/2014Grades3-8ELAMath-final8-13-14.pdf> This report explains the alignment of the 3-8 assessments results to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams and the 2022 aspirational levels for the Regents Diploma. More information about the new Regents can be found at:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/commoncore/updateccregentsexams-514.pdf>

4. Are the 3-8 ELA and math assessment results part of my students permanent record?

Individual student scores on the state 3-8 ELA and math assessments may not be placed in your child's official transcript or maintained in their permanent record. The results may be used in required federal and state reporting. Group results at the grade and district level are used by our teachers and administrators to evaluate strengths and trends in student performance. In addition, individual student results provide information used to identify students who will need academic support.

5. Do the assessments decide if my child will receive Academic Intervention Services (AIS)?

Each year the state provides a list of scale score ranges to be used by school districts for identifying students who will need mandated Academic Intervention Services. Typically, students who receive a performance level of 1 on the mathematics or ELA assessment will receive Academic Intervention Services. Not all students scoring at level 2 are required to receive Academic Intervention Services. Every building has a team of teachers and administrators who work together to identify students with academic needs. We call these teams, "Response to Intervention" or "RTI" teams. The RTI teams use many different measures to determine what type of support a student will need to be successful.

6. Do the results determine if my student will get promoted?

Student promotion and placement decisions may not be based only upon the results of the state 3-8 ELA and math assessments. Such results may be a factor in such decisions, along with other measures.

7. Does my child have to take the grades 3-8 ELA and math assessments?

In New York State, Commissioner Regulations 100.3 and 100.4 require school districts to annually administer the Grades 3-8 New York State Assessments in English Language Arts and mathematics. This requirement is established by federal education act No Child Left Behind (NCLB). To this end, all New York State schools must administer the grades 3-8 assessments in ELA and mathematics. The only students exempt from these assessments are students participating in the New York State Alternate Assessments (NYSAA) for students with severe cognitive disabilities and students who are newly arrived English Language learners during their first two years.

8. What if my child is absent during the testing period?

Each test has a make-up period. Your child will take the test that is assigned for the day he/she returns to school and then complete the rest of the test during the make-up days. If your child is not able to complete all or part of the test because of absence, she/he will be marked absent on the answer sheet for the sections not completed.

9. What happens if I choose to have my student not participate in the New York State assessments?

It is our sincere wish that you work with us on participating in these assessments so that we can comply with state regulations. We assure you that the assessments will be used only to advance the quality of our curriculum and instruction and to provide support to those students who need it.

The following outlines our district's response to students who refuse testing:

- Letter from Parent/Guardian Prior to Testing: If you choose to withdraw your child from testing please submit a letter to your child's principal prior to the first day of testing. A written and signed letter should be given to the principal no later than April 13th for the ELA assessments and April 21st for the math assessments. The Principal or Director of Instruction will contact you by phone to discuss and verify your decision.
- Refusal on Day of Testing: On the day of testing, if the district cannot verify a written or verbal approval through phone or email contact with the family, the student will need to sit for the test. If the student does not open the test booklet and writes "Refused" on the answer sheet, they will be marked as refused. If they open the answer book and begin any portion of the test, then their test will be scored.
- Supervised Study Hall: At the middle school, students who do not participate in testing and who have had their refusal verified through family contact will attend supervised study hall in an alternate location. At the elementary level, students will be supervised in a location separate from testing established by the building principal.