



ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PHILIP BENANTE, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

The beginning of spring brings a renewed sense of energy in our schools. As I have visited classrooms throughout the district, I see students who are meaningfully engaged in an enriched social and academic experience with their teachers and classmates. The spring season also marks a transition towards the end of the school year and a time of the year for our students in Grades 3-8 to participate in the New York State Assessment program.

As you know, these exams have been subject to significant scrutiny for a variety of reasons. In response to these concerns the New York State Education Department has made some changes to the exam construction process as well as to the format of the exams. A summary of these changes can be found on the opposite page for your reference. Additional information regarding these changes can also be found on our school district website under the "News" section. Please take some time to review these changes before the scheduled administration of the assessments.

You can anticipate a follow-up communication from your child's principal outlining specific assessment administration dates in the near future. If you have specific questions or concerns about the state assessment system please do not hesitate to speak with your child's classroom teacher or building principal.

I wish you and your family an enjoyable spring season.

Sincerely,

Philip Benante

Our mission is to empower all students to be self-directed, lifelong learners, who willingly contribute to their community and lead passionate, purposeful lives.



Changes to the 2016 Grade 3-8 Assessments: What Parents Need to Know

Every spring, the Grade 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests are administered to students across New York State. Below you will find information on the changes that the State Education Department has made to these tests for 2016.

Decreased Number of Test Questions

The 2016 Grade 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) Tests will have one less reading passage and fewer questions to answer. The 2016 Grade 3-8 Mathematics Tests will also have fewer questions.

Untimed Testing

The 2016 Grade 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Tests will be untimed. This change gives students more opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do by allowing them to work at their own pace. In general, this means that as long as students are productively working, they will have as much time as they need to finish their tests.

Greater Teacher Involvement

The State Education Department has increased the number of New York State teachers involved in creating and reviewing the assessments and will expand opportunities for teachers to be involved in future test development.

- Teachers from across the State gathered in Albany in October 2015 to evaluate and select questions for the 2016 tests.
- Beginning in fall 2015 and going forward, a greater number of New York State teachers have been—and will continue to be—involved in the review of all test questions and final test forms.
- For the first time ever, New York State teachers will write the test questions for the Grade 3-8 ELA and Mathematics tests. These questions will first be used on the 2018 tests.

New Test Vendor

Last summer, Questar Assessment Inc. was awarded the State's Grade 3-8 ELA and Mathematics assessment contract. Questar Assessment Inc. has partnered with the Department on the changes described above and on other changes to the Grade 3-8 ELA and Mathematics tests.

Questions about testing programs, policies, and procedures may be sent to emscassessinfo@nysed.gov

