

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

As we all learned last year when we first administered the Common Core assessments, the test is harder, and the proficiency rates will be lower than on the old tests that did not reflect the higher standards. This does not mean our teachers are any less effective or our students are any less prepared. It simply means we have set higher aspirations as we work to help our students be truly college and career ready.

The Board of Regents has worked to ensure that students, educators, schools and districts are not disadvantaged by the transition to the Common Core. Criteria for intervening in under-performing schools were adjusted to focus on growth scores, not just proficiency levels. In fact, no new districts were identified as Focus Districts and no new schools were identified as Priority Schools based on 2012-13 assessment results.

Educators should understand that their evaluations are never based exclusively on test scores, but rather on a range of measures, including principal observation. Lastour

Appendix A: Resources to

Appendix B: Exemplar Letter to Parents/Guardians

Dear [Parent/Guardian]:

Beginning in April, our elementary and middle school students will be taking the 3-8 NYS Assessments in ELA, Math and Science. Click here to view the schedule [PDF]. (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/schedules/2014/ei-schedule-14.pdf>) To help students prepare for these tests, I want to share with you some important tips to make your child feel as confident and comfortable as possible on testing days.

Reading and writing on a regular basis is one of the most important factors for success on any assessment, regardless of the content area. The more a child reads and writes the more likely they will be to reach their highest potential on any test. Encourage your child to read different kinds of texts to help them increase their vocabulary development and become familiar with different styles of writing that will help them to become stronger students overall.

Some students become anxious when tackling standardized tests. While it is important to acknowledge the value of a test, it is equally important to remind them that a test is simply one measure of performance. The more relaxed and prepared a student is about an exam, the more likely they are to perform their best and truly demonstrate their best learning.

There has been much publicity recently about state testing and the Common Core and there is a lot of misinformation being presented. The Common Core State Standards adopted by the Board of Regents in 2010 emphasize critical thinking, careful reading of fiction and non-fiction, writing with evidence, effective communication of ideas, and real-world problem solving in mathematics.

At every level, we recognize the concerns you may have about the upcoming testing and want to not only alleviate any fears your child may have, but also