

**Hudson City School District**  
**215 Harry Howard Avenue**  
**Hudson, New York 12534-1606**



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**District Office**

March 20, 2017

**(518) 828-4360 Ext. 2101**

**Fax: (518) 697-8315**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are quickly approaching the time for New York State exams for grade 3 through 8 students. The English Language Arts (ELA) exam will be administered March 28-30 and Math will be administered May 2-4. We understand and respect the concerns that some parents/guardians had about these exams in past years. However, much has changed about the state testing program that you should be aware of. I would also like to explain our approach and how we use the results so that you have all of the information needed to make educational decisions on behalf of your child.

In response to educator and parent concerns, New York State made a number of changes to the testing program last year. The changes include:

- **Fewer test questions:** Tests are shorter with fewer questions in both ELA and Math.
- **Untimed tests:** Students have as much time as needed to finish exams at their own pace.
- **Teacher involvement:** The state increased the number of teachers who review test questions to ensure that tests are age appropriate and a fair and accurate measure of the standards taught.
- **Results not tied to evaluations:** Test results are no longer used to evaluate teachers or principals. A moratorium is in place until 2019 while the state develops a new evaluation system.

We are pleased to say that due to these changes, we saw less frustration among our students.

This year, NYS has also adjusted the accommodations for Students with Disabilities. For the first time, the ELA exam may be read aloud to certain students who have that accommodation on their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The Hudson CSD uses assessment results in two ways: 1) to help identify students who may need additional supports and intervene immediately to ensure success on SAT, ACT, and Regents exams that are based on the Common Core and required for high school graduation. 2) to measure our instructional programs so we can strengthen content areas as needed.

We do not use assessment results as a single measure of student or instructional effectiveness. Instead, we use multiple measures to determine how our schools are performing. However, it is important to note that the NYS exams are the only way we can compare Hudson to other school districts across NYS so we can continuously improve our practices.



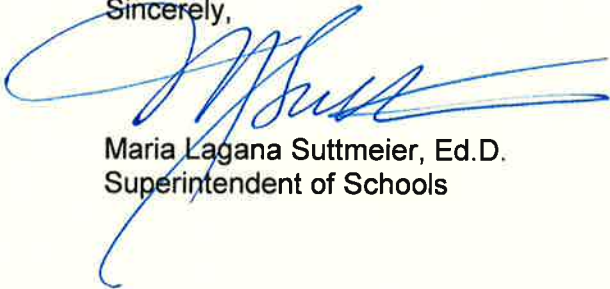
When students refuse to take the NYS exams, we are left with an incomplete picture of how our students are learning. This limits our ability to address issues in a timely manner.

We work to reduce test-taking anxiety by helping students understand that tests are just a part of their education. We do not "teach to the test" but rather use strategies within classroom instruction to best prepare them.

We respectfully encourage you to have your children participate in the NYS testing program this spring. However, if you have a specific concern or philosophical objection to these assessments, you may write a letter to your child's principal explaining this and we will respect your wishes. We must receive this information in writing one week in advance of the test dates. Students whose parents have a written letter on file will do comparable school work in a different setting.

We take great pride in the progress the Hudson CSD has made in recent years. We look forward to continuing to provide a learning environment that advances the intellectual, social and emotional development of our students so they will be prepared for college, career and citizenship.

Sincerely,



Maria Lagana Suttmeier, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools